SPIRITUAL FEATURES SEEN IN SAMSON

SPIRITUAL FEATURES SEEN IN SAMSON

AND OTHER MINISTRY

1929–1932

J. TAYLOR

Vol. 204

STOW HILL BIBLE AND TRACT DEPOT
2 Upper Teddington Road, Hampton Wick
Kingston-on-Thames

Made and Printed in England by
COOPER & BUDD, LTD., LONDON, S.E.15
1958

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SPIRITUAL FEATURES SEEN IN SAMSON

Judges 14

J.T. It is to be noted that the Spirit of God is prominent in Samson. It says at the end of the previous chapter, "The Spirit of Jehovah began to move him." Certain features mark each judge; the first one is Othniel, a man of resources; the Holy Spirit seems to be prominent in connection with Samson. The circumstances of his birth help to indicate the mind of God in him. It says in chapter 13 that "the Angel of Jehovah ascended in the flame of the altar." We are thus in the presence of circumstances that indicate spiritual things. Notwithstanding the extraordinary incongruities in the life of Samson, what underlies are spiritual features that show themselves at times. I think his history indicates the history of the assembly, marked by extraordinary incongruities, and yet God is there, and the power of God evidenced. We could not think for a moment of any individual believer being guilty of his conduct, and yet proving the power of God with him; so that his history is, I believe, a type of the assembly and God's wonderful forbearance; and we see how, at the end, the most humiliating captivity is offset by the overthrow of the Philistine world. The world comes down at the end by the same power that is seen throughout in connection with these extraordinary circumstances. The growth of his hair, I think, marks an epoch spiritually in the history of the assembly. Judges 16 : 22 says, "But the hair of his head began to grow after he was shaved"—there is the evidence of latent power in him at the end, which would coincide, I think, with our own times.

P.L. Has John's ministry been given particularly of the Lord to bring to light that latent power ?

J.T. So it would appear. The element of life is brought in, so that the hair, after the shaving, began to grow. Shaving would be humiliation. The secret of his strength had been divulged, but " the hair of his head began to grow," it says, " after he was shaved " ; it is the evidence of life after the humiliation.

P.L. The fetters of bronze could not bind life, could they ?

J.T. No. He was bound with fetters of bronze and made to grind in the prison house—a most humiliating captivity. But there was life, and it agrees with what he began with : " Out of the eater came forth meat." But the secret of it is in the Spirit. At the end of chapter 13 it says the Spirit of God moved him at Mahaneh-Dan, that is, in his own locality.

Each judge has some peculiar characteristic which indicates the times in which he had to exercise his power and influence. As I was remarking about Othniel, what dominated Israel in his time was the king of Mesopotamia—the land of the two rivers ; that is, it was a question of human resources used to dominate the people of God. The two rivers, I suppose, would point to great resourcefulness, and Othniel judged Israel and went to war, it says ; he was a man of spiritual resourcefulness. He belonged to the family of Caleb and his wife was of the same family and possessed springs of water. The idea of a spring is refreshment and resources ; there are no limits to a divine spring. So that he had greater resources than the king of Mesopotamia. I only mention that to indicate what is to be gathered up from the book of Judges, that each judge is marked by the features that mark the dominating power that exists in his day, but in a spiritual way. So in

Ehud's day, they were dominated by the Moabites, who were men of pride. The king of Eglon was a very fat man, so what met that was the word of God, the two-edged sword—the dagger with two edges. Then Shamgar, a man of experience, his weapon was an ox-goad. Experience was needed to deal with the dominating power in his day, and his experience with God involved discipline, and he was effective in that connection. He smote six hundred men of the Philistines. Then Deborah comes after him ; a woman who evidently acquired great power over herself ; she dwelt, we read, under the palm tree of Deborah. Then Gideon, who represents the greatest spiritual energy among the judges, was occupied with conserving the wheat from the Midianites. These were the features that marked these men, and God took them up and used them. Whatever were the features that were needed, God takes them up in the person and uses them.

Then there is a history of great weakness after Gideon, till we arrive at Jephthah and Samson—a history of rivalry. You have the parable of the trees by Gideon's son. Then in Samson we have reference to the Spirit of Jehovah, which is the secret of all that we get in Samson. His was a most sorrowful life, in one sense, because it was the very opposite of Nazariteship, and yet the Nazariteship was there all along. You can only understand it by taking account of the history of the assembly.

Ques. How do you regard Samson's responsible history in the light of his being a Nazarite from birth ?

J.T. It relates to the assembly. It is only in the light of the history of the assembly it can be understood, as far as I can see. The features of Nazariteship are indicated in the instructions to his father and mother. The wine would denote natural joys, which are denied to a Nazarite ; the long hair would

denote that he was to be disregarding of human and worldly propriety. A Nazarite is not to indulge in natural joys, nor is he to consider ordinary human propriety. He is to be oblivious to all these things—not to be conformed to this world in his habits and dress. He is called really to another world, and he is to be governed by that, so that his dress and deportment here are a testimony against what exists in this world. " Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," Rom. 12 : 2.

Ques. Would the Nazarite's position in that way answer to the position of the assembly or the position of the individual believer ?

J.T. What the assembly is necessarily works out from its members. The idea of the Nazarite has to be taken up by each one individually. What comes out in Romans is that, in answering to our baptism, we walk in *newness* of life. It does not say what that newness is, but the life is to be new ; in other words, it is to be different from what we had been going on with. Then the next thing in Romans in that connection is that we should serve in newness of spirit. Our ordinary life is new, and our relationship with God is to be in newness of spirit. In Christendom things are carried on in the old way. There is really no difference in principle between current religion to-day and what existed in the Old Testament ; so we are to " serve," it says, " in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." And then, in chapter 12 we are not to be " conformed to this world," but to " be transformed by the renewing of your mind " ; that is, our minds are to be occupied, not with current things, books and other things that occupy worldly people, but with things that are new—new mental desires and tastes ; and thus the Nazarite is available from the outset of the believer's history ; there is that principle. So that he is not concerned

as to how people take account of him because of his allegiance to Christ ; he is different.

The element of Nazariteship marked the assembly from the beginning ; so these four chapters devoted to Samson cover the whole history. There can be no doubt that the mind of God is seen in the manner of the Angel in connection with his birth. It says, " my name, seeing it is wonderful."

Ques. What would help us to the return of Nazariteship in these days ?

J.T. Well, we have to begin with Romans ; there can be no doubt that Romans is greatly needed. If believers in the human organisations around are enlightened by 2 Timothy, they have to begin over again—that is the principle. There are thousands of people who have been going on with Christianity nominally, but when the light of 2 Timothy comes to them and they see the necessity for separation, there has to be a new beginning ; they have to begin over again, and Romans is the fundamental part of Scripture. There is not any difference between the religion of to-day in principle and the religion of Cain ; it is the old thing. It has taken on new features, but the underlying principle is the same, and we have to begin with something new. In the case of Samson's parents, the woman is more honoured than the man. Both visits are to the woman, meaning that there was one there with whom God could link Himself. Her husband was behind her spiritually.

Ques. What would the rule of the Philistines represent ?

J.T. They were a race of big people and on the same territory as Israel ; outwardly they were in the same position. Their domination would be that, that they were men of distinction by their size. They knew the ways of Israel. They came in first with Shamgar ; Judges 3 : 31. " After him was

Shamgar, the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad ; and he also delivered Israel." It was a matter, in his case, of experience ; he got them down that way, but here in Samson it is Nazariteship. Shamgar delivered Israel, it says ; that is, there was a final issue, a definite issue to his ministry. But with Samson it was not so, he brought down the Philistine world in his death. So, in our day, the world is coming down. The overthrow of the world would synchronise, I think, with the translation of the assembly. But what strikes one is the humiliation of it. There is no glory in Samson, nevertheless the fact is there.

Ques. Do you connect the growth of the hair with what we get in the Lord's address to Philadelphia—a little strength ?

J.T. That is just what I thought, and that is to remind the world, if they only knew it, of the end. "*But* Samson's hair began to grow "—that is the end of things.

Rem. So that Samson's hair growing would be a sign in a way ; we take our bearings from what is from within, rather than from what is abroad in the world.

J.T. That is the thing ; if you see the hair growing—and it is the hair of *his head*, mark you, which I suppose would be an allusion to divine intelligence, it is life in that connection. Seeing these things, you discern more than you would know by taking account of governmental things. International occurrences are not such a guide as we might think, because things happen and re-happen.

Rem. Samson was publicly in humiliating circumstances as the assembly is also publicly, but we are reminded of the fact that the hair is growing.

J.T. That is it. It is by getting hold of things in a spiritual way that we get the mind of God on them. If we bear in mind the circumstances of his birth

and of his death, we see just how matters stand. The circumstances of his birth were most auspicious ; the angel did wondrously. His name was Wonderful, reminding us of God's wonderful ways. The more we follow the history, the more we see how wonderful God's ways have been ; His patience too. We read that " as the flame went up from off the altar towards the heavens, that the angel of Jehovah ascended in the flame of the altar." Although we do not get anything like that at the end of Samson's history, we get it at the beginning—an allusion which can be spiritually understood. I think the ascension, as we may call it, the rapture, shows that the end is in view at the beginning. You see what God will reach ; and the Angel acting wondrously, the divine way, coming into this world and going out of it, and all going up in the burnt offering in the sense of what Christ is, show what underlies the whole history. How can we understand the assembly going up to heaven save in the apprehension of that ?

Ques. Samson went astray in his affections ; has not that a voice to us ?

J.T. That is what marks the history of the assembly, " Thou hast left thy first love." Then there is the teaching of Balaam in Pergamos, and of Jezebel in Thyatira.

Ques. Where do the incidents recorded in this chapter—the slaying of the lion and the swarm of bees—come in in connection with what you are saying ?

J.T. It is an allusion, I suppose, to the death of the Lord Jesus, for that is where the history begins, and there are results from it ; there was a result in life from the very outset.

Ques. Do the bees suggest the energy of life working mutually ?

J.T. That is right. We come back to the beginning, I think, where there is evidence of life. I think

Philadelphia would embrace what is at the beginning. There is nothing said about her love for Christ, but there is something said about His love for her : " I have loved thee," He says, showing that she had kept His word and not denied His name. There were assembly features there which stretched back to the beginning. What marks the beginning is that the outcome of the death of the lion is honey. A swarm of bees, I think, is a type of the people of God in life who are the outcome of the death of Christ—their history is there.

Ques. What is the significance of the honey ?

J.T. I think, to follow the type here, it would be the yield of mutual feeling and affection amongst the Lord's people. An element of this kind has to be interpreted according to its setting ; elsewhere it would mean something different—natural sweetness. But in Luke 24 the Lord ate the honeycomb ; and He says, too, in the Song of Solomon, " I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey," so it would be something He could partake of.

Ques. Is the same thought conveyed in that as in Samson's riddle ?

J.T. Yes, I thought so. " Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness "—it was food. There was a mutual state of things amongst them in Luke 24 ; they were gathered together. Those who came back from Emmaus found the eleven and those that were with them gathered together. Then we find that the bees are at work—Luke alone presents that side ; he says that the eleven were gathered together, and those that were with them, saying, " The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Then the two related how He had been made known to them in the breaking of bread. There is allusion to the mutual working —they were all contributing. Then the Lord comes

in as they thus spake and says, " Have ye anything here to eat ? "

Rem. So you would look for the bees working at the present moment.

J.T. Yes, we come back to the beginning. So that the last days of the assembly's history are marked by the features of the first days ; that is to say, mutual affections and mutual relations and feelings. There are many who do not accept obligation to contribute in the assembly. Things are left, as far as they are concerned, in the hands of certain ones, which is not mutual feeling at all.

J.J. Would not God secure in the state of Nazariteship what He would have in the whole assembly ?

J.T. What God can do by one man is indicated in a Nazarite. But then this passage does not teach Nazariteship ; we have to go to Numbers for that. It calls attention to a Nazarite who did not live the life of one, but here it is the history of the assembly that is in view. There is Nazariteship in the individual. I think that is how it came out ; certain persons in the history of the assembly answered to it ; so, I suppose, an overcomer in each assembly would in some sense answer to the Nazarite. Take for instance in Pergamos, " Antipas, my faithful witness, who was slain among you." He must have answered to the true idea of a Nazarite. So, I believe, in every church the overcomer would answer in some sense to the Nazarite and that would be the link for God—the link for God would lie there.

P.L. It justifies God going on, and in that way defers the final judgment.

J.T. That is right. So that every phase of the recovery would be connected with the beginning. The Holy Spirit remains in the assembly ; in whomsoever He may be is another matter, but He is there, and the principle of Nazariteship has existed right through, it was there underlying it all.

Rem. Even in the dark ages ?

J.T. Quite.

Rem. So that the truth of Nazariteship was maintained all through by the Spirit.

J.T. That is what I should understand ; whereas the public history is marked by the truth having been divulged. The sorrowful side is that Samson divulged the secret, and that is what has brought in the leaven of the systems around us. The actual persons who did that is not of importance, but the thing was done.

Ques. Would you say a word as to having divulged the secret ?

J.T. When the assembly waned and left its first love the secrets were given away. In Pergamos you see new teaching. Ephesus apparently kept the doctrines right, but in Pergamos you get the Nicolaitanes admitted ; they would be teachers who would give out the secrets. They would bring Christian doctrine down to the level of ordinary human teaching, and hence vitiate the doctrines so that Christianity was brought down to the level of current teaching.

Ques. Does that reach its head in Jezebel, in popery ?

J.T. It culminates in that. She has got hold of all the secrets ; she uses the most precious terms in a most vicious way ; "that woman Jezebel," the Lord says.

Rem. It has been said it is Satan's masterpiece.

J.T. Well, it is. Then the vineyard of Naboth, the inheritance, she took hold of. What belongs to the true people of God has been boldly taken hold of by her. All the precious terms applicable to the assembly, she has taken over ; the whole thing, the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, the revelation of God, are boldly taken over as her property. That is how the matter stands. It requires Nazariteship to deal with that. So, I think, you have in Samson's history these

two things running together : the unfaithfulness, on the one hand, that divulges the secrets, that gives away the truth, and on the other hand, the Nazarite was there—there were some who were true.

Rem. They regain power.

J.T. Quite so. When the hair begins to grow, that is the end of things for the world. It is for us to see to it that there is the cultivation of what was at the beginning, that is to say, mutual feeling and affection in intelligence, which will in itself bring down all these pretentious things.

Ques. Do you think we get the support of the Holy Spirit on this line, as Nazariteship is known ?

J.T. That is where it is realised. One is struck with the allusions. First, in the end of chapter 13, the Spirit began to move Samson in Mahaneh-Dan. Then in verse 6 of this chapter the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and in the next chapter, verse 14, we read, " The Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and the cords that were on his arms became as threads of flax that are burned with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands." And so at the end he pulls down the building ; there is power—the power of God. " He bowed himself with might," it says, " and the house fell on the lords, and on all the people that were therein." We see in that the power there is where the element of Nazariteship exists. The particular form of opposition at that time was the Philistine element.

Ques. What would answer to it in our own times ? You have connected the Philistines with men of great ability.

J.T. I suppose the past hundred years has developed men of extraordinary ability, and nothing but Nazariteship could have met it. The secret of what we are enjoying, I believe, is due to the fact that there were those who took up Nazariteship, and

the Spirit of God came mightily upon them and the Philistines came down.

P.L. At the end of 2 Timothy, it is a question of the man of God or magicians ; so here would you say it is a question of the man of God or the Philistine ?

J.T. Yes. So Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, but he overthrew them by the evidence of life—the power of life. It is very beautiful to see the return to Nazariteship in the smallest way in the beginning of the growth of hair. It is in separation that life is seen. Christians who remain in the organisations around do not really live ; there are not the conditions of life. It is in separation you get these conditions—that the hair begins to grow, and then the power of God is known.

P.L. It says, " Lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone. . . . Who can count the dust of Jacob ? " Is that the vitality of life in separation ?

J.T. Quite. Then the next thing is the shout of a king is among them. Israel's king is higher than Agag. There is more there than there is in the flesh. If it is a question of big men, you have them now—men great spiritually.

HOW DIVINE HELP COMES IN AS WE MOVE IN ANSWER TO THE LIGHT

PHILIPPIANS **2** : 12, 13 ; NUMBERS **10** : 33–36

Ques. What was the thought you had before you ?

J.T. Well ; that divine help appears as the saints are themselves moving. In Philippians the injunction is to work out our own salvation ; then immediately "it is God that worketh in you." Of course there could be no movement on our side save as God begins first, but this passage and many others like it, especially Numbers 10, show that divine help appears as the saints are moving. It will be observed that it was *as they set forward* that the ark went before them. "And they set forward," Num. 10 : 23.

Ques. Do you mean that as we take up and act upon light already given, God comes in for us ?

J.T. That is what I thought. The history of the Philippian saints furnishes abundant evidence of the divine intervention as there is movement according to light already given. The apostle and his associates could have no doubt as to divine guidance—in Numbers 10 the prominent feature is that—divine guidance ; they could have no doubt as to divine guidance in reaching Philippi, but the hand of God is not there immediately. Nevertheless they were moving. They did not sit down and wait for it. They went out to the riverside and sat down there—not to look at the river or the scenery—but they talked to the women that assembled there for prayer, and then the work of God shows itself. The heart of Lydia is opened, and later, in the case of the jailor, we see remarkable testimony to the divine intervention as we are moving in relation to light already furnished. The Philippians would thus understand that as they worked out their own salvation—something that was

peculiarly their obligation—God worked in them. "It is God that worketh in you." So Numbers 10 furnishes wonderful guidance, for it is in the movement—not a word is said about the ark going before them in all the instruction—it is in the movement that that appears.

Rem. That was a distinct and new thing that had not been given before.

J.T. You never can tell; love reserves the right of its own movements. It is never restricted by its own laws. The early part of the book furnishes abundant instruction as to how they are to move, but there is nothing of this; that is, divine love would reserve the right to come in, and then it gives you the opportunity to move first.

Ques. "Even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much rather in my absence." Does the apostle set forth there the light having been brought in?

J.T. They had abundance of light as in Numbers, but we may have that and not move. The word should be translated, 'set forward'—not 'departed.' They did 'depart,' of course, but the point is not that they were leaving somewhere, but *going* somewhere, and it is in that movement that the ark comes in. It is in the movement that love comes in, perhaps in a way we have not looked for.

Ques. How would you link this up with the previous part of the chapter, where the movements are regulated by the silver trumpets?

J.T. I suppose the trumpets refer to the testimony as conveying the rights of Christ over us, would you think, in redemption? He has a right to speak and no one should turn a deaf ear, because it is one that loves us. Silver would refer to that. It is one beaten piece, meaning that it is one medium conveying the Lord's mind, first in calling us together, as it says, "They shall serve for the calling together of the

assembly " unto Moses at the door of the tent of meeting. Then they are for the calling together of the princes, the heads of the tribes. I suppose the trumpets are to regulate us in regard of Christ's authority over us. First, I think, it is the whole congregation (*v.* 3), then the princes ; then the alarm was for the setting forward. It was thus clearly the testimony to the Lord's rights over us generally. They were to assemble to Him, and then those special representatives—the heads of the tribes—then the alarm for the setting forward. There is the idea of gathering, whether it be the whole congregation or the princes. Then there is the idea of setting forward, first east, then south, meaning that the work of God is taken into account. It is in the east and in the south that they are to move. There is much involved in it.

Ques. Is your thought that this is a more intimate leading ?

J.T. I thought that the whole chapter enters into this. The ministry of the trumpets refers to priestly discernment—some testimony in the way of ministry that reminds us of the Lord's rights over us. Then we are told that they moved according to the prescribed arrangement, and then Moses says to Hobab, " We are journeying to the place of which Jehovah said, I will give it to you ; come with us, and we will do thee good . . . and he says, I will not go . . . and they set forward and the ark went before them." They are moving without Hobab. Evidently they are able to move without the natural thing that Hobab would imply. The ark takes his place—a better guide. There is no thought in Hobab's mind of sacrificing to help Moses. We can never trust nature in these matters, however kindly disposed. Love *is* sacrifice. That is what I think is meant in the ark acting thus without any previous announcement of it. That is to say, love will never fail the

saints of God. We may seem to be lacking leadership or weakened by some circumstance, but love will never fail, whatever else fails.

Ques. What do you understand by the three days' journey ?

J.T. I think it shows that they were ready to go the whole road. " They set forward from the mountain of Jehovah and went three days' journey." The question that arises in the mind is, How far are you ready to go in the testimony ? Some are not ready to go very far. Many break bread without the slightest thought of going beyond that. They break bread and they are known in that relation, but that is a poor thing. That is not fellowship with the death of Christ. The fellowship of the death of Christ means that I have got to go somewhere. Then there is the fellowship of His Son. Think of the glorious dignity of it—Jesus Christ our Lord. It is the fellowship of His death in 1 Corinthians 10, and the fellowship of the Spirit in the second epistle. So the question is, How far am I ready to go ? Here they credit the thing. They went three days' journey. If you take that road, you find the company of divine love in it.

Ques. Is that why it is spoken of as " the ark of the Covenant " ? Up to this point it is the " ark of the Testimony."

J.T. That is very interesting. It would be what God is to us.

Ques. What do you understand is involved in the movement of the people ? What is it for us ?

J.T. It is spiritual with us. Some of us were noticing that in the Scriptures the truth of the house of God appears in connection with *journeying*. It appears first in the history of Jacob when he was on a journey. Then twenty years later he is still on a journey ; he is going to Hebron—to Isaac. When he returns to Bethel God comes down and speaks to

him in Bethel. He is still journeying. That is to say, the house and all that enters into it is to aid us in our journeying. We are on the road to the eternal purpose of God ; that is the point. It is the positive thing. It is not simply that they *departed* from some place, but that they were going *to* some place.

Ques. Do you get this in Paul himself, letting everything go that the flesh could rejoice in on account of Christ—reckoning it to be loss ? Is that the taking of the three days' journey ? Then to know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings—is that the affinity between the people and the ark ?

J.T. Quite. He says, " Not that I have already attained." He was on a journey.

Ques. In Genesis 22 in regard of Abraham, the same expression is used. Abraham took three days' journey and it was on the third day that he saw the place afar off. Would these two scriptures bear on each other ?

J.T. They do. The three days' journey involves death and resurrection.

Rem. The Lord in Matthew 15 has compassion on the multitude because they were with Him three days. Then the feeding of the multitude follows. Is that the same principle ?

J.T. I think so ; it is the general thought, representing complete exercise. As we were saying in regard of the house, Jacob, after a most blessed experience typically in the house (Jehovah coming down and standing by and speaking with him) journeys, and in the journeying Rachel dies—a sorrowful thing. Rebekah's nurse had died just as he had reached Bethel. Nature's ties were thus broken up. We are thus helped in the main thought—that is, to reach Isaac in Hebron where, it is said, Abraham sojourned and Isaac sojourned. We get the

identification of Hebron ; it was given there so that we might understand what the thing means spiritually, and so in the end of Exodus, the setting up of the tabernacle, which is a type of the house, is marked by active service. As the various features are set up, what they are intended to convey is actually there. The table is there and the loaves are on it ; the candlestick is there and the lamps are lighted ; the altar is there and the sacrifices have been offered upon it ; the laver is there, and Moses and Aaron have washed their hands and feet in it. That is the house as a living thing. You are already living and moving in the thing. Then it says, the glory entered and the cloud was upon it and the people journeyed according to the cloud. It was journeying so that in these circumstances as we accept that it is a living order of things, if this movement is on, love will show itself in unexpected ways. We shall find what love can do. It is love's opportunity ; it delights to serve.

Ques. So that at the beginning of Acts 1 we get a living order of things marked by prayer. Then does the glory come in in chapter 2 ?

J.T. Yes ; they do not sit down in the upper room and await the promise. The Lord had said, " Await the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me." But they were active according to the exigences of the moment, showing that principle, that there is always something you can move on in. You do not sit still and fold your hands as in Haggai. There the people were saying, This is not the time to build, but it *was* the time. Jehovah says, If you begin to build, I will help you.

Ques. Was there building at the riverside ?

J.T. That is the principle ; there was something going on. It was the place where prayer was wont to be made. That was the idea ; the idea is that I identify myself with that. That was where God showed Himself.

Rem. We are liable to be satisfied with a settled order of things—things are duly carried out in order without the living power of it.

J.T. Whereas everything that is mentioned—the mind of God conveyed in it—is there in an active way.

Rem. It is to be realised now in spite of the weakness of things.

J.T. There is always something, however weak.

Ques. "Work out your own salvation" refers to a local company. Is that the thought?

J.T. That is the thing. We see how love will show itself. It will show itself in some correspondence with Christ. The previous paragraph of this chapter shows what marked Christ, "Being . . . in the form of God . . . took upon him the form of a servant." It was a downward thing. That is how God worked in keeping with the three days. So we are to "do all things without murmurings and disputings; that we may be blameless and harmless . . . holding forth the word of life," and so forth. Then he goes on, "If I also be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." It was not a question of calling on the gifts, but what was within the range of them all. Things were to be done in that way. "Do all things without murmurings and reasonings; that ye may be harmless and simple . . . as children of God."

Rem. It is like the Lord, "holy, harmless, undefiled."

J.T. Just so. Certainly God is not working in worldliness; that is not His way. Christ was not worldly; when He was reviled He reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not. Love shows itself in these things. So Paul brings in Timotheus and Epaphroditus in this chapter to show the kind of way in which the work of God proceeds—how love moves. God works through mediums; He takes up this and that one and works in that way.

Rem. The Philippian company is the only company that goes on with Paul to the end, of all the assemblies to whom the epistles were written. You were speaking of love in an evil day continuing to the end.

J.T. The whole point of ministry is to bring us into accord with Christ, to accept His sufferings—the ark went before. The history of the Philippian assembly shows how the ark was reflected—the spirit of it in the apostle. See what sufferings he endured—how love wrought in such a vessel. If we had more vessels in accord with the work, we should have more evidence of divine love, because love must work in a vessel. Therefore the question is, Can I be that? The epistle to the Philippians would bring that about, for we see it for example in a man like Epaphroditus who was grieved because they had heard that he had been sick.

Rem. It is very encouraging in that way for Epaphroditus was an ordinary kind of brother. In one sense he was an extraordinary one, but he was not a great servant like Paul or Timothy. It is open to each one of us.

J.T. So that each one of us may become a vessel of love.

Ques. Is there correspondence with David's three mighty men here? Do they bring the water to David in this chapter?

J.T. Quite so. "We ought to lay down our lives." The point is love; it is the most practical thing in the history of Christianity.

Rem. This is the first experience that Israel has with the ark.

J.T. Yes; the ark is now moving. It is objective; they could see it. Love says, Now that I see *you* move, *I* will move.

Ques. Does Romans give the spring to set us in movement?

J.T. One of the great features of Romans is to bring out a vessel for love. If love is in a vessel then you can see what love will do.

Ques. Do you regard each one at the end of Romans as one of those vessels, exemplifying the movements of love ?

J.T. Exactly ; the Spirit of God would call attention to certain persons—not in the east, though they had been there, but they are now at Rome—persons who were evidences of this great principle of love.

Rem. One feels thankful that our attention is being called to this. It has been a burden that each of us might be marked by movement. It is easy to become stagnant.

J.T. So that John says, Hereby we have known love. That is the first thing—that He has laid down His life for us. That is the idea of the ark going before. So ought we to lay down our lives for the brethren. We can do that.

Ques. Would you say a word about the resting place ? It says the ark went before them to seek out a resting place. Although they were taking a journey there was a resting place in view.

J.T. I think that is in resurrection—that it may be reached on the way. They would thus have a testimony in every movement of the ark to what they were finally to come to. The Lord in John 13 shows what He is at. He would teach us how to serve in love. It is the service of love. Hence, you see, the Lord laid aside His garments and girded Himself with a towel, and poured water into a wash-hand-basin—a small portable basin. You do not ask the objects of your affection to come to *you* ; you go to *them* with the thing. It is portable, and so He goes around and washes their feet. They do not have to move at all. So it says, " then he *comes* to Simon Peter." That is the idea—that one becomes a

vessel so that love can act through one. Then the Lord having done all that sits down and says, Now, you see what I have done. It is an object lesson that I should be taught how to love.

Ques. Is this movement of love included in the first word at Philippi ? " Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."

J.T. What you see in that man is that he began to move immediately. He did not fold his hands ; he began to move. He took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes and set meat before them. Then he was baptised and all his.

Rem. Salvation was not a stationary condition ; it alluded to activity.

J.T. That is the point exactly.

Ques. It says, " Work out your own salvation." Does that suggest that the material was there amongst them—Paul having been there ?

J.T. Yes ; they were thoroughly furnished.

Ques. Are we not slow in realising that where Paul has been, there has been left material to be worked out ?

J.T. Quite ; you have all the light and all the furnishing, and as you work things out you find that love can do for you more than you expect. Wisdom is love acting wisely ; love will never make a mistake. Thus you have in these journeys witness of what God is about to bring us into, because to reach the resting place you need the action of love. We may make a move towards it ; for instance, we come together to break bread. There is the furnishing—all the external things—and God takes account of that, but it only makes room for love. The ark is the principle of love ; it brings us to the resting place.

Rem. It is not the end, but the means to the end.

J.T. Exactly ; God brings us to His dwelling. He does that. So here they have these celebrations.

They would become accustomed to things. It says, "It came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered . . . and when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel." These things were forming the people of God; they were becoming accustomed to victory and the results of victory. We are not therefore a defeated people; we are accustomed to victory in the assembly.

Ques. Does the fact that the cloud overshadowed them when they moved, suggest the care God took?

J.T. That is God's own action; they had nothing to do with that. So that verse 34 says, "And the cloud of the Lord was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp." That is to honour you. That is the point here; it is the setting forward.

Ques. Would it not be the sense of God's presence?

J.T. Yes; God honouring us. That is there as we meet together in the sense of God's protection, but it is a distinct thing from the ark, so that every assembly meeting is, rightly apprehended, a means of realised victory.

Ques. I was going to ask if this really involved the whole of the Ephesian position—in the scope of it.

J.T. I think so; the saints need to be reminded of victory—consciously brought into the thing. When the ark moved, as it says, Moses says, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered . . . and when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel."

Ques. What do you mean when you say that every assembly meeting is a means of victory?

J.T. You are made to realise the power that wrought in Christ as He went forward. It is "the power of his resurrection"—the *power* of it. Then the result of that is the returning—God coming into the midst of His people, the thousands of Israel.

Ques. Do you mean it is the power of His resurrection, not merely the light of it ? There is some effect of it in the soul.

J.T. That is right; the realisation of it as together.

Ques. Does it involve constant conflict ?

J.T. We are not in conflict when together, but there is that principle coming in—a sense of victory. In Matthew 28 the Lord greeted the women who brought the disciples word. He said, All hail. That is how He met them. The angel had sent them; that is to say, His subordinate sent them. They can take orders from him—that was the test. "Lo, I have told you," he says. He was one divinely accredited. He had everything about him to indicate that he was accredited. Still, he was not Christ, and I have got to learn to take orders from someone less than Christ. The principle of representation is a very important one in Christianity, involving one that represents Christ. That angel had every evidence of one accredited. "Lo, *I* have told you," he says. Well, they take orders from him and they are on their way to execute the orders when the Lord meets them, as if He would honour you taking orders from a subordinate officer. He says, "All hail." He confirms the message—the orders—but instead of saying 'my disciples' He says "my brethren." The women are lifted up to that. He says, "All hail." They are brought into the sense of victory in the movement.

Ques. Is that not seen in 1 Corinthians 15, "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ" ?

J.T. I am sure it is. That is what the Corinthians were missing on account of their state. It says, "He *gives us* the victory."

Rem. What you are suggesting is very encouraging. If on every occasion on which we came together we

had the light of victory in our souls, what an elevation we should be lifted up to.

J.T. The Corinthians were low down; some of them were saying that there is no resurrection.

Ques. One of the Psalms says, "I will not come into the tabernacle of my house . . . until I find out a place for the Lord." Then this portion of Numbers is quoted there (*v.* 8). Is there a connection between this and Psalm 132?

J.T. Well, there it is the final thing. It is David. David prepares the way for the resting place; it is no longer being carried. Here it is not a question of entering into rest, but of rising up. "Rise up, Lord, let thine enemies be scattered." You are still in the presence of the enemy; he is still to be scattered but there is no doubt in your mind as to it. We go through. We are "raised through faith of the working of God." That is, we understand the power.

Rem. Then after that verse in Corinthians it goes on, "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." You go on with the work.

J.T. Just so, in the light of resurrection.

Ques. Do we get the idea of power in Matthew 18? "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

J.T. That is right. He is there for support. You are really invulnerable.

Ques. Do we get fresh light in regard of the ark as we go on?

J.T. Every assembly meeting is to give us an increased appreciation of Christ.

Ques. Would it be fresh light when they got to the Jordan?

J.T. The final three days would be the Jordan; that led them into the final resting place. They would be aware as to what they were going on to. But in the meantime we learn what the future is.

Rem. Every step would be in anticipation of that.

J.T. You can see how God intended that the thing should be kept alive. It was not only power at the Red Sea, but love acting in power. The wilderness journey is the way we learn how love acts for us—the way of surpassing excellence; that is what the wilderness journey really implies. I become accustomed to love's ways. Eternity is that we are at rest. We are becoming accustomed to it. We touch the thing but it is just temporary. The journey's end is really the purpose of God—Hebron—"that world and the resurrection." What a lesson we are learning every week! It is love's way—how love can come in in its own way. So that every assembly meeting is different. It is the infinitude of the variety of love in its action and service.

Rem. "He appeared unto them in another form." Love takes the initiative. Paul did not wait for the Corinthians to love him. "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved," 2 Cor. 12 : 15.

J.T. Yes; love is not going to stop. The second letter shows that definite headway is being made.

Ques. Would the last verse be what love would secure? The many thousands of Israel.

J.T. Yes; I suppose so.

Ques. With regard to the breaking of bread, would you look out upon "the many thousands of Israel"?

J.T. That is the relation in which to break bread. It is one body. It is not '*ye* being many,' but "*we* being many." All the saints are included in it. Generally the local pronoun is used but there it is "we"—the whole of the saints.

Rem. The "thousands of Israel" would indicate the dignity of the saints.

J.T. We are reminded in a very initial epistle of the many brethren in view. Christ is "firstborn among many brethren."

Rem. It is an immense comfort when you are consciously just a handful of saints to feel that "we being many are one loaf."

J.T. It is indeed; it lays the basis of Ephesians, "Till we all arrive," etc. Ephesians is the full exhibition of love. Even if it is a question of going up to heaven, we do not want to go up alone. We want to go up with the brethren. We are raised up *together*, and made to sit down *together* in the heavenlies. We are *all* there.

Rem. The ark was to be in the midst, but here it seems to move out of that setting.

J.T. That is the point. In the earlier description it was to be carried in the midst of the camp; that is to say, it is the dignity that belongs to Christ. He has the honoured place. But then, love forgoes that dignity. As in John 13 He laid aside His garments; He forwent all that as showing His love. So for us, whatever dignity I have, the importance of it is that I can lay it aside.

Rem. So that when the disciples wanted to be first, the Lord says, "I am among you as he that serves."

J.T. Yes; that is a good way—a model way. He dwelt among them as One that served. "All the time that he came in and went out among us" it says. It was in a model way.

Rem. 1 Corinthians 10 says, "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them" (*v.* 4).

J.T. Yes, it was pioneering work, and the water carrier was behind them—a most menial position. The Rock followed them. That is the way of love. So that 1 Corinthians 13 is to impress upon us that it was not at Corinth, but he has to present it in an abstract way. He calls it "the way of more surpassing excellence."

SPIRITUAL INSTINCT AND INTELLIGENCE

1 Samuel 6 : 6–16, 19–21 ; 7 : 1, 2 ; 2 Samuel 6 : 12–15, 17

I want to show how spiritual instinct develops in believers into spiritual intelligence, yet never ceasing to exist as itself, for however we may advance in intelligence, unless we retain and cultivate spiritual instinct we shall be untrustworthy and fail in crises, for instinct is truer than intelligence. This thought is emphasised in John the baptist, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus, who, recognising Him in a spiritual way, was to introduce Him to Israel. It is said of him that he was full of the Holy Spirit from the womb, a fact that is intelligible only from the standpoint of instinct, for we could not speak of spiritual intelligence in an infant. Even before his birth it was apparent (Luke 1 : 41), calling attention to the necessity of spiritual instinct if we are to have to do with Christ.

Having saved us and given us the Spirit, whatever we do must be in relation to Christ personally, for He has constituted us priests and Levites by the reception of the Spirit. The fact that John was filled with the Spirit from his infancy is to call attention to what is required from God's side in those who are to serve as priests. He tells us that he did not know the Lord after the flesh ; his knowledge of Him was spiritual. He says, " I knew him not : but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." He was fitted to have to do with Christ. He was to baptise Him.

Mary was to have to do with Christ in the most intimate way, and she was prepared for this. And

so also was Simeon. It is said of Simeon that the Holy Spirit was upon him ; not only had he the Spirit, but he was marked by Him. It was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ ; and he came by the Spirit into the temple. Then when the child Jesus was brought in, he took Him into his arms ; he was prepared for it, he was qualified for it spiritually by divine education. Thus if we are called to have to say to Him and to serve Him we must cultivate not only spiritual intelligence, but spiritual instincts.

These instincts stand out also in Jacob, to whom the light of the house of God came, and we cannot rightly be in the house of God without them, for it is permeated with pure, holy, spiritual instincts. Jacob supplanted Esau, the man after the flesh, at his birth, and this also characterised him later. He was a supplanter. Then in David we see the full development as he expresses his exercises and refers to the mighty God of Jacob. It is a question of the house : the subject began with Jacob and ends with David. Solomon is but the filling out of David.

Now in 1 Samuel 6 the ark is in captivity, and had been for seven months. The Holy Spirit gives us dates with regard to the ark, for it is the prime object of God in all its history. While it is in captivity we have divine intervention as to it directly, for God can take care of His own interests when priests, Levites and people fail Him. From His side nothing can be lost. He will even use Philistine diviners.

God operates so as to bring the captors of the ark up against an impossible wall. Those five lords with all their power, with all their resources, are brought straight up against an impossible situation, and are forced to take counsel—and God was over the counsel. He thus makes men to serve Him in His work who are not priests and Levites ; He bends them to His

will. These diviners make a remarkable speech, calling attention to God's deliverance of His people out of Egypt, for God can compel men to let go their hold on what belongs to Him. "Woe to the world because of offences." God will have to do with it on account of its damaging influence on His people. Pharaoh and the Egyptians let Israel go—not of their own will, but as compelled by God, and the Philistine diviners bring this to bear on the Philistine lords.

Then they direct them to make a new cart and provide two milch kine upon which the yoke had never come. Think of God putting this into the hearts of these men! It referred to Christ, and the spirit of Christ, for He never came under the yoke. They were face to face with the fact that although the ark was in their hands *they* had come under *its* yoke. The tables were completely turned. Can the world hold Christ? As He was about to be taken and crucified by it He says, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out," John 12 : 31. It is as if He were in control; and so the relation of the ark here to the Philistines. Their god fell before it. What were they going to do with it now? We see thus how the power of God works, and we learn to trust Him.

These men say the kine must not have been under the yoke, virtually admitting that the ark was not under *their* yoke. They were under its yoke, and they were in terror of it. The kine are to be taken from the very objects of their natural affection, as suggesting the pathway of Christ, unaffected by nature, and cutting right across it for the will of God. Natural affection is nowhere stronger than in the mother, yet these kine leave their calves, and without human guidance go straight on the highway, lowing as they go. It is divinely given instinct, disregarding the claims of nature. The calves are shut up at home.

Where is the mother's heart that would not be touched and held by the claims of her young ? But the kine go forward on the highway to Bethshemesh, for the ark is going to *its own border*.

Divine instinct ever moves in that direction. There is at the present time that which is peculiarly the Lord's place, and divine instinct goes that way. This is ever true, and if people go another way it is for want of right instincts. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer is to produce those instincts. As born again one is marked by them, but their full development lies in the Spirit. They discern what is of God and move according to His will. The kine here went along the " one highway " to take the ark to " its own border."

What was before them was a glorious death, for they were a type of Christ Himself, and of the spirit of Christ. The way of that spirit in us is the way of death. It is not the way of glory according to man ; the end of their journey is death. Paul says, " God has set us the apostles for the last, as appointed to death," 1 Cor. 4 : 9. Here the instincts of these creatures led them that way. Even the cart is used, for it is not here a question of divine intelligence, but God has respect for spiritual instincts even though unaccompanied by intelligence. The cart is used for the fire and the two milch kine for the sacrifice. It is a question of spiritual history, and so immediately the sacrifice is over you have the Levites. The Levites here represent spiritual intelligence—a normal development under these circumstances. *They* took down the ark.

Now I want to show in proceeding that the instinct that may begin spiritually may degenerate into natural curiosity. We have to take care that natural curiosity is not allowed. They looked into the ark. God will never suffer what is natural and profane. He deals with it here in a large way, for the slaughter is great. We may have a certain respect for the ark,

but indulging the natural mind we are profane. We are not caring for it with priestly hands.

Now David stands out in the Old Testament as the most spiritual man; he tells us that the Spirit of the Lord spoke by him, and the Psalms show the depth and extent of his spirituality. He represents the full result of the exercises which began with Jacob. He says, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob," Psalm 132 : 4, 5. He would worship at His footstool. So in the closing moments of his life, as presented in 1 Chronicles, you have him standing upon his feet; it is the spiritual David. We are entitled to regard saints from the standpoint of the work of God in them, and to ignore all else.

The only way to get a true view of the work of God is to see it abstractly. So 1 Chronicles gives us the spiritual David, standing up upon his feet. He is handing the responsibilities of the kingdom and the house over to Solomon, and many times he says, "*My* God," just as the apostle Paul in similar circumstances, "*My* God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus," Phil. 4 : 19. What a spiritual statement was that, and so David says, "Because I have set my affection to the house of *my* God," 1 Chron. 29 : 3.

Then he speaks of the Head. He is so imbued with spiritual thoughts and with what is due to God in connection with the house that he comes to apprehend the Head. *We* learn it in Christ, we find that there is One in whom all divine wisdom is vested. We are rendered entirely independent of human wisdom as we apprehend the Head. We see the resources that are there, and that we are to have part in them. The house has to be built for there is to be a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. It is a question of wisdom, and so

David speaks to Jehovah as Head, showing the culmination typically of spiritual progress, beginning with spiritual instinct.

It says, he heard that God had blessed the house of Obed-edom ; 2 Sam. 6 : 12. That is not said of the house of Abinadab, although the ark was there a much longer time. Abinadab is an advance on what we have in 1 Samuel 6, for his house is " on the hill," suggesting that he is morally elevated, and the ark remains there for twenty years. Nothing is said about blessing, but David heard of the *ark*, and he finds it there.

I do not go over the sad history of the new cart. The Philistine cart was used for the fire of the sacrifice. God deals with people according to their intelligence. The Philistine cart was drawn by the two milch kine, not by ordinary beasts of burden, and they were offered in sacrifice. Here David makes a new cart, and ordinary oxen draw it, and they stumble, or broke loose. We may be sure that what is common in the world will surely go amiss when used in the service of God. It may seem right, but David had to learn his lesson.

Later we see with what carefulness he moved, recognising that in having to do with the ark there must be no confidence in the flesh ; the power lies in the Spirit. When those who bore the ark had gone six paces, he sacrificed " an ox and a fatted beast." He would give God the fruit of his prosperity.

The linen ephod, with which he was girded, would show the feature of sobriety in a priestly way. David thus stands out typically as a spiritual man in having to do with Christ intelligently. The Lord has had to do with us, and now it is a question of our having to do with Him in the way of service. Let spiritual instincts, therefore, develop into spiritual intelligence, so that the pleasure and rest of God in relationship to Christ, should be secured in His people here.

SIMPLICITY AS TO THE CHRIST

2 Corinthians **11** : 3 ; 1 Samuel **21** : 3, 8, 9 ; **23** : 1–12

In reading these scriptures I have before me the thought of *simplicity*. In 2 Corinthians the apostle refers to " simplicity as to the Christ," a word which we might not expect in regard to Christ, but which we learn from the gospels has striking application to Him. Those also, who are after Christ, who have faith and are marked by His character, never fail of simplicity.

The apostle alludes to Satan's first onslaught upon our race in introducing this matter. The serpent, he says, beguiled Eve : he was operating on the same principle at Corinth. The true Eve—the assembly—was found locally at Corinth. The apostle alludes to what precedes the marriage relation ; he had espoused the Corinthians unto one Man, to present them as a chaste virgin to Christ. *He* had done it, showing that he had remarkable insight into the Lord's feelings and affections. John the baptist was a friend of the Bridegroom, and rejoiced greatly at the voice of the Bridegroom. He heard it and says, " He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." He says nothing about her in a concrete way as having any part in his remarkable ministry ; but as a man pre-eminently affected by spiritual instincts, he recognised the Bridegroom and that the bride was *His*. John was unique in that the Holy Spirit was in him from infancy, controlling his faculties and senses. He had a fine sense of what was morally beautiful ; he *looked* upon Jesus as He walked (John 1 : 36), and said, " Behold the Lamb of God." Then in chapter 3 : 29, he rejoiced because of the Bridegroom's voice, and his joy was full.

Now that is John the baptist; but Paul went further than he. *He* heard, as it were, the very breathings of Christ, being near to Him. He was not a long-distance Christian, as many alas, are; like Jonathan who used bow and arrow to make known his mind to David. Paul was so near to Christ that he knew what He desired. If you heard Paul preach the gospel, you would know he was presenting someone who was supremely attractive: *the Son of God*, He would say again and again, "He loved *me*!" He would speak of his personal relations with Christ. John the apostle conveys the same thought when he speaks of the Lord *breathing into* the disciples; and again when he speaks in his epistle of *handling* the word of life—holy, reverential intimacy with Christ in that sense, such as is fitting; for love delights in nearness, it abhors distance. So with both John and Paul, you have a suggestion of nearness; like the mighty men of David, who heard his desire and broke through the garrison of the Philistines to bring water to him. It was the devotedness of personal attachment, personal affection in these mighty men.

So in going into Corinth Paul had the desires of Christ before him. The Lord says to him, "No man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." He assured him of safe conduct, for He knew what was in Paul's heart; not simply that they should be converted, but that they should be *espoused to Christ*. Supreme simplicity marked the espousal; he himself was very simple, he was a craftsman. But for all the simplicity, the most wonderful work was going on. Think of such a ministry as that! Every convert in that town, in the apostle's mind, was part of what was espoused to Christ. Even as to his speech he says, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." He would bring in Gethsemane and the cross, but all was in simplicity, so that the

youngest there would understand that their faith "should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Then there was this transaction, "I have espoused you unto one man, to present you a chaste virgin to Christ."

One of the most baneful features in the history of the assembly is men seeking a party following. There were such at Corinth. "Ye walk as men," says Paul; that was what was going on. Paul only had one Man in his mind in his preaching. Some said they were of Paul, others of Apollos, others of Cephas. "Who is Paul?" he says. He did not mean this question for himself alone; he meant it for all these leaders in Corinth who sought a following among the saints.

Now I beg you to take note of this espousal to Christ. I do not believe any young person—brother or sister, is fit to be espoused in a natural way according to God, until such an one is espoused to Christ. If young people were more concerned about being espoused to Christ, they would find their legitimate desires fulfilled under the government of God. You have Christ first: it is God's way. He has title to us, He has redemptive rights over us.

Well, the Corinthians were taught that they were espoused to one Man and Satan saw that. He saw what God was doing, what Paul was aiming at, and he sought to spoil it. Hence the apostle says, "I fear . . . as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, so your thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ." The first letter however became effective, but there remained the danger among others, that the saints should be corrupted in their minds from simplicity as to the Christ.

Now I want to show you briefly how this simplicity is worked out typically in David. I take him for the moment as a type of the believer. There is a readiness with him to take on whatever was divinely available in his service or for his spiritual help,

avoiding pretension. As he appears in the presence of Saul on that great day of Elah, Saul proposed that he should be robed in his dress and his armour. David conceded at first, but as he moved on he said, "I cannot go with these ; for I have not proved them." They were in accord with Saul's mind and the mind of the Philistines, but entirely out of keeping with him, and so he puts them off. Young men should beware of imitating persons who, like Saul, are marked by official place and reputation.

David wisely laid aside the showy habiliments of Saul, and took for the conflict what he was accustomed to. We are told there was a pocket in the shepherd's bag which he had, indicating the simplicity of his equipment. His weapons were a sling and stones and a staff. All was simple, such as he was accustomed to use. It may be remarked here, that it is well to use artillery in connection with the enemy, but artillery service will never do with the brethren. So David selects five smooth stones out of the brook, water-worn doubtless and thus made suitable for his purpose ; for spiritually it is a question of the word of God, not a matter of show or man's device. It was extremely simple, and the result showed that such warfare is effective.

When we come to chapter 21, David is definitely rejected, he is under pressure. But he maintains his simplicity, he comes to the priest at Nob who says, " Why art thou alone ? " I wonder how many of us have had the experience of being alone as rejected. I am thinking of the solitariness of Gethsemane and Calvary. All forsook the Lord and fled. He looked for comforters and found none. It was a solitary matter, and the Lord would have us to know what it is to be alone in rejection. But although in such circumstances David retains his simplicity, he says to the priest, " What is under thine hand ?—give me five loaves of bread in mine hand or what there is

present." What have you there ? That is all : no pre-arranged affair of sending word beforehand to have things ready. You see it is simplicity we need if we are to get on in the things of God and be effective in His service. David was content to accept what Ahimelech had, and he explained what perhaps the priest had overlooked, that " the bread was in a way common." In his simplicity the believer is intelligent and sets other people at rest.

Then David asks, " And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword ? " He needed one. As you set out in reproach you need bread to sustain your heart, and you need a sword. We are to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. As to bread, there is abundance from heaven, but it is what is available that you take. God will bless that. In feeding the multitude the Lord used what a little boy had—five loaves and two fishes. That was what was there ; it was " the simplicity as to the Christ."

As to the sword Ahimelech says, " The sword of Goliath the Philistine . . . behold it is here." That sword was a type of death. Ahimelech knew something about the death of Christ typically, but what was he doing with death ? Even nominal Christians recognise the death of Christ, but what are they doing with it ? Ahimelech says, " It is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod." By death, we are told, the Lord has annulled him that has the power of death ; Heb. 2. Satan used death to terrify the souls of men ; the Lord took it out of his hands and has put it into the hands of Christians. Not only is the death of Christ available for salvation, but it is available for a *weapon* ; I am to put to death the deeds of the body ; I use death as a weapon for that. This priest apparently did not use it ; he knew what it meant historically, but Christ's death, resurrection and ascension are present realities. The foundation of Christianity is that death has taken place ; the

meritorious death of Christ. It is done never to be repeated.

Christianity implies not only that Christ died for us, but that we die ; there is the present application of death. David here says that there is no sword like that ; " give it me." The state of things was disclosed in the way the sword was held, it was wrapped up. There was no present application of the death of Christ, nor does it appear that the ephod was being used, for the sword was wrapped behind it. It was a mere official order of things without the corresponding living state. " But if ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." You are a priest unto God by the Spirit in a practical way. You have the sword in your hand ; you use it against yourself. It was used by Christ, but it is now in your hands. Death is yours, as the apostle said to the Corinthians ; 1 Cor. 3. David takes the sword of Goliath and goes on.

I pass on to chapter 23 ; it shows how David took up the priesthood. Chapter 22 tells of the destruction of the old order of priesthood. Abiathar fled after David and told him that the Lord's priests had been slain, but instead of using *him* at first, David acts as priest himself ; *he* enquires of the Lord. He acts simply in bringing in a priesthood that is according to God. Every young Christian needs to have part in that, but before you talk about entering into the holiest, enter your *closet* ; that is the thing to do first of all. The Lord tells you to enter your closet and shut the door, and pray to your Father in secret. There is often a desire to know something about entering the holiest, but very little is said about entering the closet, yet that is what the Lord enjoins. Pray to your Father in secret and He will reward you openly. Do not put oil on your head or adorn yourself when you go in to God ; you will be graced spiritually when you come out. Moses' face shone

when he came out. God will reward you openly, God will honour you. There is an evidence on your countenance that you have been in with God.

David here enquires of the Lord ; it was effective ; it was simple and the Lord says, " Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. . . . I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand." But now a serious matter occurs : the people David is serving are traitors. We may have to serve people who do not love us. The Lord served people who did not love Him, and so it was with David here, he delivered Keilah, but they were ready to deliver him up. In great simplicity, using the ephod, he enquired of the Lord, " Will the men of Keilah deliver me up ? " Whatever there is of God, use it, for " all things are yours." Not only is death ours, but Paul is ours, and Cephas is ours, so we may use them. The servants all belong to the saints. David uses the ephod indicating his simplicity and how the new order of priesthood took form. Thus as we are simple, using what God makes available to us, we progress in the truth and become effective in the service and worship of God.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH HEAVEN

LUKE **10** : 17–21 ; **19** : 37–40 ; **24** : 50–53

J.T. We were noticing this morning that the gospel of Luke has in view, amongst many other things, of course, that there should be that here in the absence of Christ that corresponds with heaven. At the end the Lord is seen definitely parted from them in the attitude of blessing, having led them to a point, that is to Bethany—well-known to Him. Love and intelligence towards Him having been brought about there, He leads them to that point, and He was carried up into heaven in the attitude of blessing. He is blessing them at that point, as in the Psalm, "*There* the Lord commanded the blessing," Psa. 133 : 3. So He is blessing them *there*, and He is carried up into heaven and they worship Him and return to Jerusalem and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. That is how Luke leaves the facts—the narrative, and it is to continue. At the beginning of the gospel heaven comes in first in a dignitary, that is in Gabriel, and then in an angel, for one unnamed came to the shepherds who were tending their flocks by night after the Lord was born, and a light shone round about them, and then in announcing the birth of Christ to the shepherds a multitude of the heavenly host joins the angel, and they praise God ; they say, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men." Then they go up again into heaven. So that heaven is brought into view in a dignitary and in an individual angel, and then in a multitude—it does not say of angels—but a *heavenly* host. Heaven is thus brought into nearness, and the shepherds, as the angels go up, go to see the Babe. So that in Luke we have the idea of heaven coming

into view ; we have persons coming out of it, and going into it, so that heaven is prominent. I thought we might consider these three passages in that light.

Ques. Then is it your thought that where the Lord has commanded the blessing, what should characterise that is heavenly intelligence ?

J.T. Yes ; Bethany was marked by intelligent affection. They knew how to entertain the Lord there. There was a risen man there, and Mary who anointed His feet with the ointment, so that there was intelligent service. And it was the place of love, and there He blesses them.

Ques. How would that intelligence be obtained ?

J.T. Well, I think the whole gospel has that in view—not only intelligence, but priestly intelligence. The gospel opens with a man and his wife ; she is a daughter of Aaron, that is, of the priestly family. Zacharias is engaged in his priestly service according to the order of his course and is offering incense. There is the altar inside, and the people are praying outside, that is, he is engaged as you might say, intelligently. But an angel appears, it says, at the right hand of the altar of incense (Luke 1 : 11), as if there were something required that was not there. Well, the angel was there and what follows shows that Zacharias was not really in the priestly state ; he did not believe. He had been asking for a son, but he did not believe that he could get one. The angel announces that he is to have one, but he does not believe it. God would indicate that He seeks more than our service ; He looks for the state becoming to priesthood. So that the unbelief of Zacharias brings in dumbness until it is fulfilled, until John the baptist was born. Then the kinsfolk of Elizabeth would have the child called Zacharias, after the name of his father, ignoring all this. They would have the child brought in on the natural line. But Elizabeth would not have it, nor Zacharias.

He writes saying, John is his name ; then his mouth is opened and he blesses God and speaks of Christ. It says in verse 67, " Zacharias his father was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, because he has visited and wrought redemption for his people." So that he speaks immediately of Christ, not of his own son. He is thus brought into priesthood in a priestly state—full of the Holy Spirit.

Ques. Is your thought that the whole service of any one that has owned the power of the Spirit would really be Christ ; that his whole interest would be in either speaking of Him or presenting Him to God ?

J.T. Then he has got substance. There is a passage in the Old Testament concerning Levi, that is, the priestly tribe. He has got substance, spiritual substance. It says of him, " Bless, Jehovah, his substance, and let the work of his hands please thee," Deut. 33 : 11. That is to say, a spiritual man has substance.

Ques. Is it that substance comes from heaven and is for heaven ?

J.T. I thought that. In this gospel the Babe is alluded to as " That holy thing." It is the substance, the holy substance come out of heaven, for He *is* out of heaven. That is the thing that we are to have. Wisdom causes those who love her to inherit substance ; Prov. 8 : 21. You cannot think of Zacharias having anything really. He was in the holy place offering incense, but you cannot think of that as anything for God, for he was there in unbelief, and the angel stands at the right hand of the altar as if God would indicate that this is what He has in mind—the question of power. It is the *right* side of the altar.

Rem. How different from Hannah. She prayed year after year, but there was no lack of faith on her part.

J.T. No; she got what she asked for and presented him to the Lord.

Ques. Why did you start reading at the passage where the seventy returned with joy; Luke 10 : 17?

J.T. To bring in the Levites in their heavenly relation. That is an advance on what we are speaking of. The seventy had gone out representative of levitical service from the standpoint of Numbers, that is, those who carry things, and toil and labour. Well, they were successful in their service, but the Lord in His remarks directs them away from Numbers, without naming the books as to their teaching. Deuteronomy and Joshua generally contemplate the priests and the Levites as the same—"the priests the Levites." The distinction between the priests and the Levites in Deuteronomy and Joshua is not very marked. Indeed those who carry the Ark are definitely called priests in Joshua; Josh. 3 : 8. In Numbers they are under the supervision of Eleazar (Num. 3 : 32), but in Deuteronomy and Joshua they are the priestly tribe. That is what the Lord has in mind, to lead us out of the service of toil into our heavenly relations. So that He says, "Rejoice not that the spirits are subjected to you, but rejoice that your names are written in the heavens," Luke 10 : 20. Now if you compare that with Hebrews 12 you will see it says, "Ye have come to . . . the assembly of the firstborn who are registered in heaven," Heb. 12 : 23. That refers to the Levites in Joshua; their portion is heavenly. It is in that way, I think, that there is correspondence here with heaven, not because we are toiling labourers, but because we are heavenly already. The clerical idea would set that aside, but the true Levites of God are heavenly; their names are written in heaven, and if they toil here, they bring the heavenly in, but their service is as priests.

Ques. In heaven being prominent in Luke, is there the thought of our minds being carried there?

I suppose when the Lord was carried up, He carried the affections of the saints with Him ?

J.T. That is the idea. You can understand how they would follow Him. I think that the closing verse (Luke 24) shows that they corresponded with what was in heaven.

Ques. Is it your thought that this priestly spirit should characterise every Christian ? It is not only for a few, but that we should all be Levites and priests.

J.T. Yes, the divine thought is for us all. But it is a great thing, I think, to see the distinction between the levitical position in Numbers which implies toil—the carrying of things, and the priestly position in Deuteronomy and Joshua. That is, in the land the position is changed. Our names are said to be written in heaven, and thus we are to represent heaven here in a priestly way. The seventy were engaged with their service—their success in ministry, and they relate to the Lord what they had done, whereas He directs them to their heavenly portion, " Rejoice," He says, " that your names are written in heaven." We ought to understand that we have a fixed place there.

Ques. Would that fit us for priestly service ?

J.T. Yes ; I see that I am heavenly and that I belong to the priestly tribe. There is much made of that in the types. You have in Exodus 2 a man and his wife of the levitical tribe, and then in chapter 6 their names are given. From them sprang the priestly family—that is, the family of Aaron, as if the whole tribe is identified with that family. So that the idea of a priestly family runs through, and I think Luke brings it in, and the Lord shows that the family is heavenly. In Joshua they had no inheritance on earth ; that was the chief feature of the Levites. They were distinguished in that way. But they had a heavenly inheritance.

Ques. The seventy were not to carry supplies with them. Would that indicate that they were to be supplied from heaven ?

J.T. That is exactly the idea. As we were remarking at Belfast, the people were to serve God in the wilderness. That would mean that they should not draw from the world ; in our service we do not draw from the world. The world is barren of anything that we can use ; the heavenly does not use these materials at all. Christ has come by a better and more perfect tabernacle, that is, not of this creation ; Heb. 9 : 11. So that our materials are not of this creation ; they are heavenly. And therefore there is nothing to see ; earthly religionists have a great deal to see, that is Babylonish. But the heavenly makes no show ; he has got things that the natural eye does not understand or see—the better and more perfect tabernacle, not of this creation. It is a spiritual thing.

Ques. Would our names being written in heaven refer to sovereignty ?

J.T. Exactly ; God has written them there according to His own wisdom. You can understand how the tendency would be to rejoice in your successful service and never touch the heavenly. And so it says, " In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit," Luke 10 : 21. The Lord gives a lead there : " In the same hour " ; it is as if the thing came into His mind, what God was doing, what the Father was doing.

Ques. Was the intelligence necessary to this state entirely from God ? There is none of the earthly intelligence in it ; all comes from God.

J.T. Yes, all comes from God, hence if they were to serve Him in the wilderness, they would have to draw from heaven. Therefore Moses is taken up to the mount to be with God forty days, and God shows him the pattern. It is a heavenly thing. Sure

enough the people had the material, but that was spiritual—what they were formed in. It is a question of the work of God.

Rem. The Lord said to Peter, " Flesh and blood has not revealed it to thee, but my Father," Matt. 16 : 17.

J.T. That is the idea ; it is the heavenly.

Rem. In Luke 15 you find that there is joy in heaven. I suppose we are slow to realise that primarily the point is what is in heaven, not what is on earth.

J.T. Yes ; I have no doubt that in the Lord here referring to their names being written in heaven, the whole teaching in this respect—Deuteronomy and Joshua—would come into His mind. God was unfolding in type so early the heavenly position of His people, and heaven can only be represented by heavenly people. That is why the angels are brought in in the beginning of the book, because they were the only ones there. But now the assembly is to be there. And so in Hebrews 12, we have come to the assembly of the firstborn who are registered in heaven. Now it is very beautiful to see that the Lord rejoiced in spirit. He gives us a lead. It is not angelic praise, but the praise of a Man here. That gives a lead to those of us who are men, for it is in men that all this is to be worked out. And so He praises the Father. He says, " I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth, that thou hast hid these things from wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes." It was pleasing in His sight to do that. Then in chapter 19, as He enters the city, there is the praising of the whole multitude. It says, " As he drew near . . . all the multitude of the disciples began, rejoicing, to praise God with a loud voice . . . saying, Blessed the king that comes in the name of the Lord ; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest " (*vv.* 37, 38). You will notice that " Peace on earth," is left out here. In chapter 2 it

is referred to, but it is left out here, because it makes room for the heavenly side of the position before the earth comes in.

Rem. We might raise the question as to whether there is anything other than peace in heaven, but I suppose the thought is that the church takes her place and displaces all other authorities.

J.T. Yes, that is what is intimated here. Revelation shows how the heavens are cleared. In fact the Lord had said that He saw Satan fall from heaven. The heavens are to be cleared of all disturbing elements, according to Revelation, and thus the thing will be brought about literally. But in the meantime it is a matter of faith. The assembly's place in heaven is anticipated.

Ques. Is not the position that the Lord is so jealous that even the levitical service should not in any way supersede in our affections the position to which we have been brought ?

J.T. Yes, that is the point in chapter 10. Their service was very successful, and whenever our service is successful we are apt to rest in that, whereas the Lord would lead us into Deuteronomy and Joshua to show us the rest and dignity that belongs to us as of the levitical tribe.

Ques. Would you not say that, taking the first day of the week—the gospel being set where it is—those going out do so following on what they have touched by way of the Supper ? Do they not, as having touched the heavenly scene and all that is connected with it, go out in all the sense and dignity of that ?

J.T. I think that is the order. So that in Acts 13 they were ministering to the Lord and fasting. That is the levitical heavenly side, and as they did that the Holy Spirit said, " Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them " (*v.* 2). We go out from that setting, so that every-

thing begins now with the assembly, the first day of the week.

Rem. I suppose that touches the thought in Hebrews: "For both he that sanctifies and those sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises," chap. 2 : 11, 12. It seems to be like Luke.

J.T. Yes; it corresponds in that the brethren are brought into accord with Christ. He is not ashamed to call them brethren. The Father's name is declared so that they are constituted to be fit to be with the Lord in His service Godward.

Ques. Is that the thought lying behind the word 'incense' in Luke 1?

J.T. The incense was not really there in Zacharias' service. The angel appearing at the right side of the altar would show that God was looking for more than that; the right side is the full thing. And that comes in in Christ. When He rejoiced in spirit, you may be sure God got that from Christ, and He was giving us a lead.

Ques. Do you think that even when things are going smoothly, the Lord might give us indications that He is looking for more than that?

J.T. That is what I was thinking. We may have the order of meetings, as we say, right and nothing outwardly missing, and yet God may not be getting what He is after at all. He may have to come in at the right side of the altar and intimate that there is not just enough there.

Ques. Is it not the great object of levitical service that the priests are maintained?

J.T. That is the thought, of course, but that rather belongs to Numbers. The nearer you get to the land in the types, the more the Levite and the priest merges.

Rem. So that we get to a scene of rest.

J.T. Yes, so it is in the assembly. There is the toil side through the week, which is Numbers ; then there is the land, and the nearer you get to that, the more the Levite merges into the priest. Really the Levite is, in a sense, higher as to dignity because he is a firstborn ; not only is he of the priestly family, but he is a firstborn ; he is taken instead of the firstborn of Israel. Hence Hebrews 12 contemplates the dignity of the levitical family ; they are registered in heaven. And no one of them has any dignity above the others ; they are all equal.

Ques. It is the priests that bear the ark when they are approaching the land, is it not ?

J.T. Well, in Numbers they would be called Levites, but in Joshua they are called priests.

Rem. I suppose a priestly state would underlie all true levitical service.

J.T. There is a remarkable balance between the levitical idea and the priestly idea, though the dignity is in the Levite ; that is the way the scripture views it. The Levite is a first-born ; it is not so in the priesthood. Aaron had sons, but it is not intimated that each of the sons was exactly on the same level as the others. Eleazar had a distinct place.

Rem. In levitical service to-day we have to be priests.

J.T. We have, but the levitical idea comes first ; Aaron's father and mother were the son and daughter of Levi, and he himself is called " the Levite," Exod. 4 : 14. The dignity is in the Levite, but the state is in the priest. We are in a scene of unholiness and the like, and the state of the priest is to meet that. Aaron is called the " saint of the Lord " (Psa. 106 : 16) ; he is a sanctified one. That is what you need here, not in heaven. You need the dignity in heaven. There is no emphasis laid on holiness when there is no evil.

Ques. Would the merging be seen in 2 Chronicles where it says, " The priests were too few, therefore their brethren the Levites helped them " (chap. 29 : 34) ?

J.T. Exactly ; it would look as if they *could* merge, that they can merge if the state is there for it.

Ques. Would that encourage us on the line of all that we are levitically, contributing to what we are in a priestly way ?

J.T. That fits in with the teaching of Numbers, that in your toil as a Levite through the week, it is a question of labour. That is from the standpoint of Numbers, but from the standpoint of Joshua I am heavenly because I am a Levite.

Ques. It says that the seventy returned and spoke of their victory over Satan. Is that our history through the week as coming into contact with the world system ?

J.T. That is the idea of it. Having to contend with evil, you overcome in it, but the Lord would say to you, There is a greater thing than that ; your levitical dignity involves that you are heavenly, and that is the thing to rejoice in.

Ques. That is our origin ?

J.T. That is the idea ; they were taken instead of the firstborn in Israel. The priestly family was really a different growth from the levitical family, because that family had to do with evil in the service of God in the wilderness, but primarily the dignity is in Levi. It is Levi that is dealt with in Moses' blessing ; not Aaron, but Levi ; Deut. 33 : 8–11.

Ques. Do you suggest that in our levitical service it is a question of overcoming the world's system, but that we are not to boast in that, but in our heavenly origin ?

J.T. Yes ; it is a question of the sovereign selection of God ; He has written your name in heaven.

Ques. Would that give you power, and a sense of dignity ?

J.T. It does ; it gives colour to all that you do.

Ques. Is that how God finds good pleasure in men ?

J.T. Well, I am sure it all works out from Christ—what He is. He has become a Man and men would come in in that way for God's pleasure. But Levi is God's sovereign selection, really you might say, Ephesians, for that is what it is. God has selected us in love before the foundation of the world and written our names down. That is the greatest thing. Now the priestly family developed out of that is because we have to do with evil here ; it works out in the types in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers—what the priests have to do in the wilderness where dead men and bones are. All kinds of evil have to be contended with by us. That is the idea of the priesthood. Holiness not only judges evil but repels it, and that is the thing that is needed. That is why we are called priests, that we can carry on the service of God where the evil is, in spite of the evil. But the levitical idea preceded that and continued after it because we are written in heaven eternally. The Lord rejoiced in spirit. Why ? Because of the kind of people He was going to have in heaven. Every one of those names written in heaven would be delightful to Him. He says, " I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth that thou hast hid these things from wise and prudent and hast revealed them to babes." The " babes " are the Levites—those who are going to inhabit heaven. We are down here in the business of Christ as reflecting the service of heaven. It says " Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest," Luke 19 : 38. That goes on now. Then in the last chapter the disciples return to Jerusalem as blessed and they carry on this service —the service of God. They are full of joy as worship-

ping Jesus and they praise God continually in the temple.

Ques. Does the necessity for priestly condition arise *only* because of evil ?

J.T. It arises because God is to be served down here, that we are to serve God in the wilderness, and as in the wilderness the priesthood is brought into evidence. Aaron is simply a prophet in Egypt, but he is introduced to us later as a Levite—" Aaron the Levite," Exod. 4 : 14.

Ques. Is priesthood necessary for praise ?

J.T. It is whilst we are down here. The priest keeps out evil.

Ques. Do you mean the evil that is in you or around you ?

J.T. Oh ! in yourself. The epistle to the Romans shows you how to deal with it in yourself ; Romans is to make a priest of you. You learn there how to deal with sin in yourself. But the dignity belongs to the Levite. You are a priest because you are a Levite. The priestly family emanates from the levitical tribe, and hence the levitical tribe has the pre-eminence.

The epistle to the Romans brings out the idea—the Lord Jesus rose from the dead " according to the spirit of holiness," chap. 1 : 4. That is how He is introduced. In all dealings down here on God's behalf, the element of holiness must be there. And so in regard of the Christian it says in chapter 6, " Having your fruit unto holiness " (*v.* 22) ; that is, through righteousness. As practising righteousness, you " have your fruit unto holiness, and the end eternal life." Then in chapter 7 you " serve in newness of spirit " (*v.* 6). That is the kind of spirit that you have got—" not in oldness of letter." Then at the end of that chapter it says, " I myself with the mind serve God's law " ; that is how I come into priesthood. Then in chapter 8 you say, Abba,

Father, by the spirit of adoption. In chapter 5 the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the *Holy* Spirit ; the element of holiness is brought in. Then in chapter 12, you offer your body a living sacrifice, *holy*, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service. There you have constituted priests. But we have to bear in mind that the levitical family precedes the priestly and that holiness—the state down here that is requisite for the service of God, lies in the priest. That is what is developed in this book (Luke) ; it is the priesthood maintaining what is for heaven in spite of the evil that is here. So that they are in Jerusalem praising and blessing God in spite of the evil that was in Jerusalem.

Ques. What is the thought in their going to the temple ?

J.T. That was God's contribution to Israel. It is not the upper room here as in Acts.

Rem. It says that the priests bare the ark. I was wondering whether it is contact with Christ that would induce the priestly state.

J.T. I think you have to see how the thing is worked out in your soul ; that is Romans. Romans is the groundwork of everything for the Christian.

Ques. Would you see priesthood worked out in Jeremiah taking the precious from the vile (Jer. 15 : 19) ?

J.T. Just so. They are very few Christians who understand the levitical teaching of Deuteronomy and Joshua. Numbers is understood, but I do not believe Deuteronomy and Joshua are understood. The nearer you get to heaven, the more the Levites and the priests merge.

Rem. And your thought is that Luke gives us the Deuteronomy and Joshua side.

J.T. That is what the Lord would transfer your mind to in saying " Your names are written in heaven."

Rem. So that at the end, the little company seen here are already in accord with heaven.

J.T. I think you have got to read into this the previous reference to heaven. All the scriptural books are constructive; they work up to a point, and in Luke the point is that there is a priestly company on earth maintaining the service of God.

Rem. Not only are their names written in heaven, but the education has been so carried on in their souls that they are now found in accord with it, and the result is pleasurable to God.

J.T. And the peace in chapter 19. There is peace in heaven and glory in the highest. It is very remarkable that that should appear just there.

Rem. That would be heaven's response to Christ.

J.T. Quite, and I think that must enter into the last chapter, because they are down here maintaining accord with heaven. Christ had gone in; they saw Him go up. They would see what a place He has up there. Chapter 9 speaks of the time of His being received up. You would get the impression that heaven has a wonderful thought of Christ, and you want to have that down here. But you can only have that by a priestly state, and I think the Lord gave them every advantage because He led them to a point where the priestly state was already established, where they knew how to receive Christ and anoint Him. He leaves them at that point and goes up to heaven; then they go back to the city imbued with that spirit.

Rem. I think the thought that all the praise that is secured throughout the book is gathered up in these last few verses is very precious. The Lord's movements had produced praise and accord with heaven, and now at the end it is all gathered up together. I think it is very encouraging and helpful.

Rem. The point towards which all was verging was Bethany.

J.T. Yes, the Lord would lead them to a definite point; that is what is in mind. It is Bethany, a known position. He does not leave them in an adverse atmosphere; He goes up from a point where love was known, where the heavenly thing was already known.

Rem. Bethany means "the house of fruit," so that there is fruit for God from that position.

TREASURE POSSESSED BY THE SAINTS

MATTHEW 13 : 36, 44–48, 51, 52

I AM thinking particularly of treasure, and of each one of us possessing treasure, and of how it may be possessed. The divine thought for us is that we should be possessed of treasure ; that we should not only have enough to live on, but *affluence*. What marks the world to-day economically is living and making á show on the principle of credit. The idea of living on income seems to have passed. The world has drifted into a position of dependence on the future ; many are living on their capital, others, as I have said, living on future earnings on the principle of credit. This nation as a whole may be regarded in that light—living on its capital and not on its earnings, and of course there can be no accumulation of national wealth thus. God would not have it so with His people ; He would have us to pay our debts (according to the type) with the oil as sold, and live on the rest. To say the least, that there should be a living means of livelihood without borrowing or living on the possible future. God would have us to live, not only comfortably but in *affluence*, and to have enough in our affluence for *treasuries*. And so I wish to speak of treasure and that we all should be possessed of it—we *may* be, *should* be—and also to show, the Lord helping me, the way of the acquirement of wealth ; so that there might be over against the principles of the world, the principles of God, the economy of God, the resources of God, and the consequent manifested enrichment of His people.

Now, speaking of the thing from the divine side first, to confirm what I am saying, in the book of Proverbs we have the statement that wisdom walks in the path of righteousness, in the midst of the paths

of judgment: so as to cause those who love her to inherit substance; chap. 8: 20, 21. Then it adds: "and I will fill their treasuries." In other words, the first principle definitely of wealth is the inheritance, and the formation of income consequent on the inheritance is *our* side. In the Authorised Version, Wisdom says: "I *lead* in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment." And very likely the force is there, showing the *way*, and that does not mean borrowing. It indicates, beloved brethren, the way wisdom took with the end in view of those who love her inheriting substance. It cost wisdom something. Coming into this world the Lord had to face what was in it. There was only one way, and that was the way of righteousness; He *loved* it. He did not institute the idea of borrowing; He restored that which He took not away. He did not evade anything. What was needful for the end in view He accepted, that is to say, the path of righteousness and the paths of judgment. One could enlarge on that, for it involves the death of Christ. As the apostle says most touchingly, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." It is in his *second* letter to the Corinthians he says that. You see the way, at what a cost, possible riches, an inheritance, have been secured and brought into evidence for us. *Substance!* that we should inherit *substance* and that our treasuries should become full.

The epistle to the Colossians speaks of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, but these are hidden in the mystery, and that, beloved, is not far away. The mystery is not some theoretic thing; it refers, to be simple, to yourself and the next brother to you, or to myself and the next brother to me. It is in the use, so to speak, that we make thus of our neighbouring or local brethren that we find the way to this class

of treasure. This *class* of treasure—the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—(what the Greeks would consider exclusive to a few in their way of looking at it) is available, you see, in the mystery. I only touch on that as indicating how the matter stands ; what is *available* to us in the brethren as in the light of the mystery according to Colossians. It is not *so many* brethren, of course, but it is a question of brethren in whom Christ is, "*Christ in you*," and the working of the mine of wealth is indicated in that love is in evidence among us, so that we arrive at the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. They are hidden there. I believe, dear brethren, that if Colossians is thus understood we should begin to work the thing, the mine, so to speak (that is where the treasure is) and we shall soon have some of *that class* of treasure—wisdom and knowledge. The Corinthians were not working that mine ; they were working another ; they were working as a philosopher would do, on the principle of wisdom of word—what poets work with, and writers of men. They make words ; they are, I might say, working capital. But the treasures of wisdom and knowledge imply much more.

I only touched on Colossians, dear brethren ; I wanted to dwell on Ephesians, from the divine side. Colossians brings the thing, you see, very near, "Christ in you." Ephesians is on a wider basis, where we have everything viewed in its fulness, so that here it is "the unsearchable riches of the Christ," and these unsearchable riches are announced in the gospel. Ephesians guards this in bringing out the immensity of the things. They are beyond us, you see, in Ephesians. The love of Christ is beyond us ; we are to know it, but it surpasses knowledge, and the riches of the Christ are unsearchable.

The Lord is on this line in the chapter we have read in Matthew, and I wanted to confine myself now

to this chapter. One's desire is, as I said at the beginning, that there should not be poverty with us, but wealth—substance. The Lord intends that we should be possessed of substance, of treasure, things treasured, things new and old.

To understand the chapter we must understand these two facts—that the Lord had left one house and entered into another. There may be some here who have never left the house which the Lord left, but if *He* has left a house I have to look around and see if it is the house I am in, and if so, I must leave it too. The Lord had left one house according to the beginning of chapter 13, and entered into another according to verse 36. In between He spoke in parables. He went out by the sea and *sat* by it first, meaning that He was not going back ; He was taking up another position. Sitting means permanency in regard to the thing in hand. He is not going back to the house of chapter 12. Many, alas, have come out and gone back ; that is apostasy in the principle of it.

The Lord sat by the sea, and then He entered into a boat in view of the crowd and sat in the boat—that is another thing, and in that position He spoke four parables, formally called parables. Now these four parables lie, so to speak, between the two houses. In those four parables there is a process of disentanglement in which I learn what *that* house means and what *this* house means ; that whilst the Lord has left that house, He is still speaking to the public. In these last days of ours the Lord has never given up speaking to Christendom in general, but not from the basis of a house in it, that is, He has left the thing and has judged it by leaving it, but He turns back and speaks to those who are in it. It is important to notice that, because it maintains us in a right attitude.

There is no order in a crowd. The Lord did not

attempt to regulate them. He spoke to them and dismissed them, and then He enters into another house, and in this house you do not get Him speaking in parables. ('Parables' is not the word used.) I want you, dear brethren, to come into this house, so to speak. The chapter really defines our position at the present time, and it indicates how we reach substance unalloyed. Many have much truth, but they have it in the house, one might say, which the Lord has left, and I do not know of a doctrine they hold which is absolutely pure; there is always a twist or a colour to it which, to say the least, damages the truth, and hence the importance of judging the whole thing, the system indicated in the first house, and of coming into this second house. He entered into it. Before entering into it He dismissed the crowds; they are adjusted, they are not going to harass us. I am speaking now in relation to how we reach wealth. The public thing is left. The crowd is left; it remains a crowd. There is, as I have said before, no order according to God in a crowd, but He can keep things in hand so that a way is made that we may come into the house with Him. It is not like the house of Lot. In Sodom the house was besieged in the most shameful manner. What of holiness could be there? There was unleavened bread, it is true—a tribute to Lot—but his righteous soul was vexed from day to day, and so it is with every Christian who is in any worldly system, and what spiritual wealth could be acquired in such circumstances? The Lord did not smite them with blindness as in the case of Lot, but simply dismissed them and entered into the house.

The disciples come to Him and say: "Expound to us the parable of the tares." Now you see them in the house with the Expositor. In answer to our desire there is nothing, I know of *nothing*, He will not expound. "Beginning at Moses and all the

prophets, He *expounded* unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself," Luke 24 : 27.

Anything that the Lord has to say to the public is parabolic now. The truth is there and places them under responsibility, but it is hidden. A parable hides the truth, but the truth is there, and the corresponding responsibility of the crowd. An exposition is not a parable ; it is the unfolding in the Lord's own way of whatever *is* unfolded. " Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto *them* " and later on He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, saying, " *Thus* it is written, and *thus* it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Is that simply historical ? Not at all. It is going on all the time for us who will avail ourselves of it. " The Lord will give thee understanding in all things," but " think of what I say," 2 Tim. 2 : 7. Why, then, should we be in spiritual poverty or ignorance ? " The *Lord* will give thee understanding in all things."

Now what we see here is that having expounded unto them the parable of the tares (which I do not intend to go into—I am only speaking about the exposition), He speaks of the righteous shining forth as the sun, and then in the Authorised Version verse 44 begins with the word ' again,' but that word is not really there, and that being so it means that the Lord is not continuing to link up his communications to us within with the parabolic communications without. That is, it is not the same thing. The kind of thing which we have had the last hundred years, dear brethren, is not what they have had before, it is not a continuation of what they had in a parabolic way, but the Lord takes up the whole thing and presents it to us in itself.

There are two ' agains ' in regard of the others. That is, there is a question of sequence—one after another—but this resumption of what we speak of as

similes of the kingdom is not begun with 'again'; it is a new thing, another series of instruction belonging to the house, and it is here that we begin to see something about treasure in the chapter. There was a treasure found, and it was valued. We may say, dear brethren, that there was a need there. If you see precious treasure you want to obtain it, to get into the indisputable possession of it without a question. The Lord was in need of it, and that is the way the Lord took, He "sold all whatever he had." That is to say, it is a question of knowing how to value a thing, whether what I have is worth letting go so that I may have this. That is the principle. "He sold all that he had," it says, and why? because he valued this more than the other. It is a question, therefore, of *valuing* things. The Lord leads in that way.

Then He is seeking something distinctive, and here I go to something I was speaking of last evening, extension. I believe that the pearl is an allusion to the assembly in its full thought according to Paul's ministry. The Lord was seeking that, the full thought, you see, of the assembly, not a partial thing as at Pentecost; it was there, and His rights are asserted there in a most striking manner by Peter. He had title to all that was there. Who that loves the Lord would deny Him every bit of treasure that shone out in that day! You take the whole of the second chapter of the Acts, after Peter finishes his address, and see the three thousand come in. What a treasure that was to the heart of Christ! It is a sort of indication, you see, of what was there, and what the Lord added to. He could commit Himself entirely to it, and how the heart yields to Him His rights—all that precious treasure belongs to Him. He had acquired it at great cost, but then that is not exactly what He was seeking, it is not *all* He was seeking. What He was seeking is definite, and we have the figure of a merchant, that is, a

man qualified to judge of pearls, who was seeking goodly ones, and he found this one and would have it at all cost. I do not say that it was an afterthought ; it was *not* an afterthought, but it is the order in which we find it here. There is the treasure of which we are not told what it was (verse 44), but the *pearl* is a *whole* thing, you see, a thing to be understood in its entirety, and one valued by the Lord in the figure as of great price. He secured it. That is what I would commend as the lead which the Lord gives of valuing a thing and then the surrender in order to get it.

Then the third figure of the kingdom which is communicated inside comes very close to us. It is not a figure exactly of treasure, but to bring out ability to discriminate between what is good, *living* things (because fish are peculiarly *living* creatures), and what is worthless. It is a feature of the kingdom which, I believe, applies very forcibly now, the determination by persons sitting down, that is to say, in deliberation, to make a selection of the good. We want only the *good* fish, and the other we cast away as worthless.

That is what the Lord finishes with inside, and then He goes to the question, " Have ye understood all these things ? " *All* these things. Now that is the challenge, dear brethren. There are always constantly coming up courses of instruction, for no two ministries are alike, and if the Lord is pleased to bring any feature of the truth to our attention He challenges us : " Have ye understood all these things ? " It certainly is a searching question. Some say these things are too deep, that they are involved, but then look at the Lord's parables here ! There are these four parables. Suppose they *are* a little obscure, they are intended to be. As I said, parabolic ministry is intended to hide the truth. The truth is hidden, but it is there, and your state is tested by it.

You say you do not understand it—you leave it at that, and you will never get inside the second house. Suppose you do not understand it, why not turn to the Lord about it ? It is a question of your state, you see, if you do not understand. If I do not see what others see it means that my sight is bad and I must see to that.

" Have ye understood all these things ? " the Lord says, and they say, " Yea, Lord ! " I think that is very fine. They had been *inside the house*, you see. That is the point. And then the Lord says "*For this reason*," that is to say, for the reason that you understand, there is a possibility of a householder, many householders, any number of householders. If *they* understood, why not we ? " For this reason " the New Translation puts it ; that is, for the reason that *they* understood, the thing is understandable. If *they* understood, why not I ? and if I do, what am I ? I am a householder !

The Lord refers to the scribe, which I think is significant, " Every *scribe* discipled to the kingdom of the heavens is like a man that is a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old " (*v.* 52). Now a scribe is a person who is accurate. You may say much more about him than that, but a man who writes is an accurate man, that is to say, the effect of writing is to make one accurate. The effect of conference or taking counsel with people is to make a person ready, it may be, in his speech, that he may be ever ready with his word, but if a man is writing then accuracy is a point. One marvels at noting the accuracy of Scripture. How thousands of years before, a principle which God intended to come out later is written down with accuracy. Should it not be a matter of concern with us to be accurate ? I find it difficult myself—the mind is very treacherous—but the Lord helps us, you see, even in that, to get things in their proper setting.

"Every scribe discipled to the kingdom of the heavens is like a man that is a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old." There are some people who live in the *old* things, but if I have nothing but old things antiques lose their value. It is when you have *new* things that the antiques become of value. You say: Look at the wonderful design of these old things! and I see the wisdom in the new—all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in the mystery. The divine thoughts which the Holy Spirit brings into view are all 'new' treasury brought down from heaven with the Spirit, but the same Spirit which brings these down has formed the things, so to speak, thousands of years ago, and you see how beautiful they are. It is on that principle that the Lord is helping us in the Old Testament. In the possession of the new things which the Spirit has brought in we can go back and look into the old and see it is all beautiful, it is all Christ! You see, the Lord expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself, everything a precious antique, old and precious, and the householder, the scribe, understands. "Yea, Lord," he says, and he brings them out one after another, but he does not cast his pearls before swine, nor, like Hezekiah, show all to the Babylonians; he brings them out for the lovers of Christ, those who love wisdom. Wisdom would gratify our taste for these things by bringing them out.

One principle of the householder is industry. You get it here in this chapter and in chapter 20, and later still. Now the use of the word is generally attributable to God in this gospel, showing what God is in His industrious ways here in hiring labourers and fencing round his vineyards, etc. It is the carefulness of God which we are to imitate, to be a householder, building up industriously a rich spiritual establishment, and in the measure in which we are

thus enriched we enrich the assembly. That is the idea, and so in these last days I believe the Lord would have us not to be wanting of substance—treasure—that we should not be dependent on others, but that we should be in *affluence*, we should be able to bring out of our treasure things new and old !

UNITY IN THREE ASPECTS

EXODUS 24 : 3–8 ; NUMBERS 1 : 1–19 ; JOSHUA 4 : 1–8

J.T. These scriptures suggest unity under three heads ; first in relation to the covenant, then in relation to the kingdom, and then in relation to life. Unity is an essential feature with God in all His dealings with His people, and He seeks in every way to introduce it among us.

We see in Exodus the connection with the covenant. Moses sets up an altar and twelve pillars " according to the twelve tribes of Israel." It was an opportune time for the introduction of the idea of unity among the saints, for they had just had the experience of deliverance out of Egypt and of God's covenant opening up His heart to them—in type, at least—so that they are ready to undertake to keep their part in the covenant. " And Moses came and told the people all the words of Jehovah, and all the judgments ; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words that Jehovah has said will we do ! " They are undertaking unitedly, with one voice, to keep the covenant, as if they were under the influence in their hearts of what had been set before them in the deliverance out of Egypt and God's speaking from the mount. Then it is said, " And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah," for, the people having with one voice undertaken to keep them, they are put into writing, and then he sets up the pillars. He " rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel." On their side there was the acceptance of the covenant, the altar indicating their readiness for sacrifice—at least in the mind of Moses—and the pillars denoting the unity of the tribes as in the mind of God. For

unity is not simply a matter of one meeting, or meetings in a district or country ; the idea of unity from God's side involves all the saints. So the twelve pillars here would denote—at least in the mind of Moses—that unity according to God was to be maintained. And then all was ratified by blood, typifying that all is secured through the death of Christ.

S.J.B.C. Would the twelve pillars come in at the Supper in connection with the one loaf, and the cup of the covenant come in afterwards ? The blood was sprinkled. Is that the aspect of the blood we have at the Supper ?

J.T. I think that is good.

S.J.B.C. There are many who come to the Supper who have simply the blood for shelter before them, the blood on the lintel and the side posts, but the blood of the new covenant leads us a long way beyond that.

J.T. So it says, " And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant that Jehovah has made with you concerning all these words." That is to say, we are bound up with the covenant, including the words ; the words convey it. We have, therefore, before us a great incentive to unity, viewing it in a typical way in the body of Christ which is for us, suggestive of our unity : " We, being many, are one loaf, one body," and the blood of Christ sprinkled upon the people, the blood of the covenant, as the Lord said, " This cup is the new covenant in my blood." So that the Lord's supper is intended to promote unity. Of course, it is a memorial too, but it is intended to promote unity, unlike the heap of stones that Jacob and Laban reared and on which they ate and separated from one another. That was a symbol of separation rather than of unity, and that should be avoided—agreement to differ, eating with different thoughts and diverse feelings in our hearts.

A.M. Would the verse in Corinthians, " We, being many, are one loaf," give the idea ?

J.T. That is what I thought. " We, being many," meaning, among other things, that each would not have his independent view as so many units in the world. It brings in a unity that is essential to the thoughts of God, to His testimony here, for the testimony is bound up with that unity. The vessel of it, " the Christ," is based on unity.

A.M. Do you suggest that we begin with the thought of unity by appreciating it in that way ?

J.T. That is the way it stands. That is the first thing the apostle has to take up with the Corinthians. They were not united at heart ; they had different leaders amongst them. So that is the first thing he takes up very strongly, pointing out that the divisions among them involved the denial of the testimony, when one said he was of Paul, another of Apollos, and another of Christ. " Is the Christ divided ? " he says.

S.J.B.C. It was just the one thing they seemed not to have written to him about and yet he takes it up as the most important error amongst them.

Ques. Would the coming under the direction of Christ as Lord be the remedy for this danger ?

J.T. That is contemplated earlier. The Lord was recognised in their song as they crossed the sea ; there was the acknowledgment of the lordship of Christ. But then, whilst that ought to promote unity, a greater incentive is the death of Christ, His own death. " He is Lord of all," as Peter says, but the greatest incentive to unity at the outset is the death of Christ as for us, expressed in the Supper. It is what He thinks of us—His blood for us.

F.I. Is the same principle seen in 2 Corinthians 3, where the apostle says, " We all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory " ?

J.T. Exactly. There you see a great unifying feature. You are changed into the same image by looking at the glory in the face of Jesus. It is a positive thing. The glory involves the ministry of the new covenant ; that is to say, it makes it effective in our hearts. It is a delightful service of the Lord Jesus to bring in the love of God and make it effective in our hearts, and we, looking at that glory, are changed into the same image, so there is a similarising effect that goes beyond the first epistle. We have the principle in the first epistle, but the second brings in a positive thing, the glory in the face of Jesus, and the effect of it in us is much the same as the second giving of the law. We have the principle here in chapter 24, but the second giving of the law, where Moses' face shone, is the amplification of it, and connects with the new covenant.

Ques. Would the introduction of the Supper in chapter 11 be the great remedy for the lack of unity at Corinth ?

J.T. That is how it stands.

Ques. And would the " Lord's commandment " have a great connection, the recognition that what was written was the Lord's commandment ?

J.T. Exactly. So you have the authority of the Lord combined with the commandment, and " his commandments are not grievous " as you apprehend Him in His love.

Ques. Would it suppose that the twelve pillars were exactly alike ?

J.T. I should think so. There would be nothing to indicate disparity in the tribes. Each tribe would be recognised in its own place and importance. In Exodus they are said to have gone into Egypt as the sons of Israel, " These are the names of the sons of Israel," chap. 1 : 1. Then we have the names of the tribes ; they are viewed in their dignity as the sons of Israel. So in Corinthians the fellowship is the

fellowship of God's Son ; there is a dignity in the fellowship. The pillars denote the mutual dignity of the tribes as to what they were in the mind of God. We have to regard them as to what they were in the mind of God, because, although their births and subsequent histories afford most sorrowful evidence of the flesh, which Jacob takes full account of in his blessing in Genesis 49, yet, in spite of all that, every tribe was blessed. They go into Egypt in dignity as the sons of Israel, and these pillars would suggest what they are in their dignity in the mind of God and the unity that is to mark them, for they had committed themselves to the covenant. They are, as it were, in possession of the love of God, not only the blessing in Jacob's blessing, but the love of God in Christ, as we may say. They accept that, and the blood is sprinkled upon them. Those twelve pillars would denote a unity that should never be impaired.

S.J.B.C. Would you connect unity too with the seventy elders, and the young men, and then the people ? They were all one.

J.T. Yes. There is variety in the details, because in the opening of this remarkable scripture the direction is given to Moses, " Go up to Jehovah, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel." Then, in verse 9, " And Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up ; and they saw the God of Israel ; and there was under his feet as it were work of transparent sapphire, and as it were the form of heaven for clearness. And on the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand : they saw God, and ate and drank." They were to go up in dignity to the mount of God, and they were to be ennobled—they are called nobles—and they eat and drink and see the God of Israel. So we are surrounded here with wonderful incentives to practical unity.

P.L. Would this be found in the expression at the

beginning of 1 Corinthians, " God is faithful, by whom ye have been called into the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord " ? Is that the idea of their being blessed as going into Egypt ?

J.T. Yes, and then the dignity of the fellowship. This suggestion of unity is encased in the most beautiful touches of heavenly dignity, and that is how unity is promoted, in dignity. God has ennobled us and our nobility should lift us above the littleness of the flesh in rivalry and personal feelings. God ennobles us so as to lift us above those things in perfect unity. So in the Lord's prayer to the Father in John 17, He clothes the idea of unity with most wonderful things about us, for practical unity is the most important thing in the testimony.

F.I. Why are the youths brought in as offering up burnt-offerings, if unity is established in the twelve pillars ?

J.T. To bring in the idea of imperishableness—youthfulness.

F.I. Like the thought of the " new man." The new man is youthful, fresh life. The older we become the more difficult it is to impress us, but a youthful person may be impressed aright. I suppose Israel was that. " When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son," Hos. 11 : 1.

A.M. Is it the power of divine love that produces unity according to the divine thought ?

J.T. Well, it is, and then youthfulness, the freshness of spiritual life which is imperishable. " When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." And God says, " I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holiness unto Jehovah, the firstfruits of his increase," Jer. 2 : 2, 3. That is what is seen here. God would impress us with His thoughts and hence the use of the words

here. The words are recorded so that they might lay hold of the people ; the people had committed themselves to them.

Ques. Would the Supper having its proper place in our hearts promote unity and youthfulness, because it is an appeal of the love of Christ to us to bring about a recognition of the rights of Christ ?

J.T. Quite, and then it keeps us fresh and young. Although we may be old in years, we are young in spiritual life and maintain our freshness.

Ques. Are those the conditions that enabled Moses to take the blood ?

J.T. That is how it stands. " And Moses took half the blood, and put it in basons ; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar." The blood put in the basons is in relation to us, for application to us, so that the full force of it might be understood. Some is put on the altar and other put in basons, and then it says, " And he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the ears of the people ; and they said, All that Jehovah has said will we do, and obey ! And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant that Jehovah has made with you concerning all these words." So that now we are brought under the blood, not as a shelter from the judgment of God, but as a token of His love. That is the thing.

Ques. Would the blood of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings bring in the idea of devotion ?

J.T. Exactly ; it is burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. Peace-offerings denote fellowship. Burnt-offerings denote what Christ was to God and peace-offerings bring Him in in relation to us.

W.B.T. Is the fact that all these actions are mostly Moses' a suggestion from the divine side ?

J.T. Yes, God took them up on the ground of their acceptance of the covenant. I do not think it marked them much, but still the reference in the

prophet would show there was something there at the beginning—" the kindness of thy youth."

Ques. The Hebrew servant comes in between chapter 19 and this one. The same words were spoken by the people in that chapter ; there was no blood sprinkled on that occasion, but the Hebrew servant comes in between. What is that ?

J.T. The Hebrew servant typifies one who loved Jehovah and would magnify Him. That is to say, Christ is brought in there, and that enters into the Lord's supper, for it is there that the will of God is carried out. He magnified the law and made it honourable ; in Christ the law was fully maintained, and on the basis of that Moses can now sprinkle the blood on the people.

Ques. Do you connect verse 9 of 1 Corinthians 1 with chapter 11 at the Supper ? Do we reach the fellowship of God's Son there ?

J.T. That is the dignity of it, but here it is more chapter 10. Chapter 1 is the fellowship of God's Son, that is, the dignity, and chapter 10 is the fellowship of His death, and then later we have the fellowship of the Spirit. Those are the three aspects of fellowship in the two letters.

S.J.B.C. It is always the fellowship *of*.

J.T. Yes, whereas in John's epistle it is *with*. It is the character of the fellowship in Corinthians.

N.K.M. Would you say another word as to the blood ? You referred to it as being a token of the love of God.

J.T. It being put in basons here would call attention to that. The volume is to call attention to what there was on God's part, so that the Lord calls attention to the cup as the new covenant in His blood. It is the idea of volume, of greatness, of value, so it is, " as often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye announce the death of the Lord, until he come." It is the value of the blood. In the

basons the thing is there before you in volume, so that the value of it is before your eyes.

W.B.T. Is there freshness every time we partake of the Supper ?

J.T. I am sure that is one great feature, to maintain us in practical unity one with another. It maintains us in freshness of affection.

In Numbers we have unity in connection with the kingdom, not exactly in the thought of the lordship of Christ, although all that is involved, but the moral weight in the kingdom. There are Moses and Aaron representing the authority of God, but there is moral weight in those twelve men who are expressed by name, a unity of moral influence. That is the idea of their being grouped around the tabernacle where God is. That is to say, it is the kingdom of God in these first two chapters of Numbers, in the sense in which it is said to be " righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The saints are taken account of by their tribes under the influence of these princes in the tribes, and they are set in their tribes round about the tabernacle where God was. There is an incentive to unity in moral influence, the influence of spiritual power in persons—in elders or in whomsoever it may be, all coming under the influence of God dwelling there by the Spirit now, so that we have a wonderful position in which we enjoy " righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

P.L. Does that bring us to chapter 7, the offering of the princes at the dedication of the altar ?

J.T. The princes there are representative of all. We see in those twelve men the wealth of Israel in perfect unity, all influenced by the same thoughts of Christ. It is a very fine position in Numbers 7, all in relation to the Lord. It is the outgoing of the wealth of Israel represented in those twelve princes, each one influenced typically by exactly the same

thoughts of Christ. There could be no greater expression of unity than that if we are all prompted by the same thoughts of Christ.

Ques. Would that be in view of the journeys of the people according to God as presented in Numbers ?

J.T. Yes. They have not begun to move yet, but they are set round the dwelling place of God. What an environment that is ! Although in the wilderness, God is dwelling there, and these men were each set in relation to the standard of his father's house, each father's house in relation to his tribe, each tribe in relation to his three, and each three in relation to the tabernacle. Jehovah is called upon to shine before Ephraim and Manasseh. That is what was there ; the presence of God and the shining of divine influence exercised over all. That is where you realise what the kingdom of God is, because it is not the kingdom of heaven in Romans but the kingdom of God, that is, the presence and sway of God here in the power of the Spirit.

Ques. Does that come out in 2 Corinthians ? " I will dwell among them, and walk among them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be to me a people," chap. 6 : 16.

J.T. Exactly. God dwelling among us and walking among us—what an influence that is !

F.P.S. What is the thought of each man being a head of his father's house ?

J.T. The idea is that he is head by moral power. He got it by some means. It was not by lineage, but the heads of the tribes were that by moral power. It is not a question of appointment exactly, but what they were by moral power so that Jehovah recognised them. These are the men that were selected in all matters ; they were responsible, for they had moral weight among the people.

Ques. Would you say that unity is maintained by moral power ?

J.T. That is another phase. The first is the covenant, what God is to us in grace and in love, and then moral weight prompted amongst us by the Spirit, the development in us of moral weight that we represent the moral authority of God. But the kingdom of God is more moral authority, what He is in His influence as here by the Spirit. The kingdom of heaven is more Christ in heaven, but the kingdom of God is more the Holy Spirit down here, God dwelling here by the Spirit and all the saints surrounding Him.

Ques. Was this intended to preserve the children of Israel ?

J.T. It is not intended to be an arbitrary rule. It is a benign kingdom : " righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," and that promotes unity.

Rem. In Exodus we have the first year, and those men were acquainted with God during that year.

J.T. Yes. Another thing is that Numbers contemplates the position in the wilderness. The speaking is in the wilderness : " Jehovah spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year." So they had had a year's experience at the least.

S.J.B.C. It is said too that the book is called " In the wilderness."

J.T. Showing that it is God taking account of us in our wilderness circumstances and the provision He makes for us there. He would say, as it were, I am perfectly aware of what you are going through. That is what it means. He speaks in the wilderness. It is God Himself in it and knowing what it is, but in His own appointed abode in the tent of meeting.

Ques. It has been remarked that the wilderness was no part of the purpose of God, but it is essential for us, is it not ?

J.T. It is. It accustoms us to God in adverse circumstances, " What the God that thou hast found."

The God that we shall know in congenial circumstances in heaven is already known in adverse circumstances and thus well known. It is a time of acquiring a knowledge of God that we should never have if there were no wilderness. If God took us to heaven immediately on our conversion we should never know Him in adverse circumstances. It is in these that God is brought out—" What the God that thou hast found." So at the end of the wilderness in Numbers 21 they move directly to Pisgah. There are four points reached, the last of which is " Pisgah, which looks over the surface of the waste." That is to say, you have a retrospective view of the wilderness and it is that you might recount what God has been to you. So Numbers at the end gives us the encampments of the people. Loving His people God records their encampments. He had a part in those encampments Himself, and it is for us to go over each of them and recount what God was to us in them.

N.K.M. What is the force of verse 17, " And Moses and Aaron took these men who are expressed by their names " ?

J.T. There may be something in that, that their names conveyed who they were. They were men summoned on all occasions of importance by Moses, summoned in relation to councils and the like ; they were men of renown, men known by their moral influence among the saints.

Ques. Is the definite thought you have in mind that unity is maintained by moral influence ?

J.T. That is the thing, the idea of the kingdom of God. It is the presence of God here by the Spirit forming men in moral power, but God ever known here among us.

F.I. Would these men be formed in moral power by viewing the tribes as set around the tabernacle ?

J.T. Exactly ; it is the apprehension of God by the Spirit that gives you that power.

F.I. They were not moved at all with regard to what was given to them personally.

J.T. Each was in relation to his tribe and also in relation to the dwelling of God. The dwelling of God amongst them was the great centre of influence and power.

S.J.B.C. You would agree that righteousness is established by the death of Christ, peace proclaimed in resurrection, and joy in the Holy Spirit in what you are confessing ?

J.T. That is right, and practical righteousness and peace corresponding to what God is in the death of Christ.

Ques. Would not this connect itself a little with Romans 12, the boards of the tabernacle ?

J.T. Exactly. There we are said to be " one body in Christ." That is the idea, all one in Christ, not one in fleshly agreement but one in Christ.

Ques. What is the thought of God walking among them ? We can understand the thought of dwelling.

J.T. It is said that He walked with them in a tent and a tabernacle for forty years. In fact, He walked with them all the time up to David, showing how lowly was the place taken by God, walking with us. In 2 Corinthians, however, it is walking *among* us, which I think would include the thought of His surveillance, that He knows what is going on. If He walks among us it is obligatory to see that the camp is clean, that there is nothing to cause offence.

Rem. " Touch not the unclean thing."

W.B.T. Does this correspond with the introduction of the kingdom of God in 1 Corinthians ?

J.T. I think it does. Now the third point may rightly be called the unity of life, that is, we have arrived over Jordan. The people have reached the land and crossed the Jordan and that denotes the energy of life. They could not have crossed it had not the ark gone before, which was power in Christ.

The waters of Jordan were driven back by that. "What ailed thee, thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou turnedst back?" Psa. 114 : 5. It was the ark, the presence of the Lord, but then, as the Jordan was driven back and they went over, a man of each tribe took up a stone and carried it over on his shoulder into the land. That denoted that he had power, not surely to drive back Jordan, but power enough to take up a stone and carry it over, showing that it is life, the quickening power of God in us as seen in Colossians, quickened with Christ, and that is evidenced in power to take up a stone as the representative of each tribe in life and take it over into Canaan and set them together as twelve in the place where they lodged.

A.M. Would this be more the spiritual power in regard of unity?

J.T. I think so. It is Colossians where the apostle combats for them that they should be "united together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God," chap. 2 : 2. It is a unity in life, a basis for our procedure together into the divine thoughts, into the purpose of God. We can proceed in it thus in unity.

S.J.B.C. I suppose it is the moral thought in Corinthians, "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body," 2 Cor. 4 : 10.

J.T. Quite. They crossed over as united in life, and the twelve men carrying up those stones denoted power so that they were set down together in life. Now the point was whether that was to continue, whether, in Colossian language, a man should come in and persuade them with words of philosophy and vain deceit, or whether they should be diverted by circumcision, the worshipping of angels, and other things. The point is to hold on that line together in

the energy and unity of life so that we should be led into the full thought of God for us, " the full assurance of understanding, to the full knowledge of the mystery of God ; in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge."

Ques. So we touch that which is collective now ?

J.T. Not in the sense of being gathered together, but collective as including all the saints of God from the very outset. You never lose sight of the saints of God and that is what the twelve means in this respect, so in Colossians they had love towards all the saints, and they are to proceed into the " full knowledge of the mystery," meaning all the saints. You must include the saints in the mystery, " in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge."

Ques. Is the unity becoming coloured by heavenly light in this passage ?

J.T. Exactly.

Ques. How would the men of Numbers 1 help in this connection ? Would they be of any assistance ?

J.T. You have the men. There are still twelve men acting, but acting now on the principle of life in a moral way among the saints, to show there is life there. Each man carrying his stone showed he was a living man and he represented his tribe, so that the tribe is living and all the twelve men are set down together in life.

S.J.B.C. Do you mean life practically in the soul ?

J.T. Not simply the spirit of life as in Romans ; Colossians is more the thought of quickening.

P.L. Would it suggest an impression of what is spiritual upon the men of the children of Israel whom Joshua had appointed ?

J.T. Yes. Joshua is the spiritual leader of the people. He is the leader in Canaan. It is Christ really as spiritual Leader, and it is said that " on that day Jehovah magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel ; and they feared him, as they had feared

Moses, all the days of his life" (*v.* 14). It is Christ acquiring a new place in our souls as our spiritual Leader; He is magnified in our eyes.

Ques. Does that connect with Colossians?

J.T. That is the point. The greatness of Christ is brought before us in chapter 1. The great weight of all the varied glories of the Person of Christ is brought to bear upon us so that He is magnified in our eyes. Christ in us is the mystery and He becomes "everything, and in all."

Ques. Are we dependent upon Colossians to take us over?

J.T. Well, we go over following the ark. It is a question of power. We are not taken by the hand and led into Canaan; we were taken by the hand and led out of Egypt, but we go into Canaan in our own strength as following the ark.

Rem. There was one man of each tribe who took the stone.

J.T. He was representative of all. It means that we go over Jordan in power; it is a question of subjective power in the soul.

Rem. Life seems to be evidenced by enjoyment as you get over into Canaan.

J.T. Just so.

P.L. Does the thought of "lodging this night" suggest they are not in the full noon-day light which Ephesians would suggest?

J.T. Just so, and it is just for a night. The point is you are going further, going up into the thing, the enjoyment of the full thought of God. This is a lodging place. They went back to Gilgal; that is another thing that comes out in the next chapter, but the great principle first of all is a lodgment. These twelve stones represent a living state of things in the whole of the people, and the children say, "What mean these stones?" In a word they meant the power of God, that God had driven back the

Jordan in Christ, but He has also quickened us, for we have been carried over in power. It is a living thing come up out of death.

Rem. Before Joshua was magnified in their eyes, the two and a half tribes went over in array.

J.T. That shows the idea. Although those two and a half tribes broke the unity later, it is not broken here, but it is seen in completeness.

THE MAINTENANCE OF GRACE

LUKE 23 : 34 ; EPHESIANS 4 : 32 ; DEUTERONOMY 19 : 1–4, 8–10

THESE scriptures treat of *grace*. Grace is intended to characterise the whole period between the coming of the Holy Spirit from heaven, and the coming of the Lord for His people. It will be a great triumph (and I believe we may expect this), if it ends up with the maintenance of grace. If it is to end thus, the assembly, at least in principle, must be in evidence. And so in the book of Samuel, which is typical of what I am speaking, we find that feature of the assembly in type in Abigail. She is introduced after the death of Samuel as one " of a good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance," and who in a crisis maintained the position in the prevention of punitive judgment. The time of vengeance is not yet, though it soon will be. And so Abigail stands in the way of that ; she prevents in grace, tactfully and with humility, the act of vengeance which was in David's mind ; she prevents blood-shedding.

Now that position in 1 Samuel 25 indicates how matters stood at the outset. The assembly is seen as understanding the dispensation, and as possessing by the Spirit come down from heaven, the means of meeting anything that would mar the dispensation. That is what I have in view. The epistle to the Ephesians is that which treats of the assembly position in this respect, as in other respects also. It is here you specially get the feature of *superlatives* employed by the Spirit, as depicting the dispensation ; or the endowment, or furnishing, of the assembly. So that we get such an expression as " the glory of his grace." Think of the *glory* of it ! David's intention of smiting Nabal would not be the glory of divine grace !

And then we have the expression, " The riches of

his grace." Ephesians gives things in their fulness; it rises to the altitude of the gospels, and nothing can exceed that. But the design is that the work of God should culminate in what is equal to that; of course Christ must ever be supreme, "He must have the pre-eminence in all things," but what is in view is "the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ." That great result is designed for the assembly; so we have rich superlatives as describing grace, or love, or counsel as applying to her. Ephesians gives you *fulness*; so that, as I said, we have such expressions as "the praise of the glory of his grace," and "the exceeding riches of his grace"—marvellous thoughts! That is what is to be displayed. As we shall be "in the heavenlies," we shall be to the praise of the glory of God's grace, and the exhibition of the exceeding riches of His grace. So you see what is in the mind of God, and what He would have maintained correspondingly in us now.

I therefore read Ephesians 4 : 32, which refers to the *kind* of forgiveness with which we have been forgiven, not by, but "*in* Christ," that is, on that level. It is a great thing, dear brethren, to study and experience spiritual altitude. It takes a strong heart, as in natural things; but what strength of heart is obtainable, as we find in this same epistle. We are to be "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that the Christ may dwell, through faith," in your hearts. It is to be obtained on the principle of *bowing the knees*. "For this cause I bow my knees," says the apostle; the thing is so great and blessed that we must not come short of it. If the Ephesians were not bowing their knees, the apostle was. That is how it is obtained; and then it adds, "To him that is able to do far exceedingly above all which we ask or think, according to the power which works in us"—it is something that is here, "the power that works in us." It is in regard

of such the prayer is. It is that we might have strength of heart for the great position this epistle contemplates ; that we should not be on the level of religious man, but on the moral elevation indicated here.

The kind of forgiveness and feelings that mark the saints are to be like those that are in God, that is, God in Christ. " God in Christ has forgiven you " ; which is the level, as indicated in the gospels. And so I chose what I apprehend is the supreme expression of grace. No one who loves Jesus can read Luke 23 : 34 without being touched by it. It is the supreme expression of grace in the presence of all the power that Satan could marshal against Him. The opposition of the world under Satan was there in all its force, not in any detached or promiscuous way, but in an ordered way, for the prince of this world had come ; the position was a military one. Satan had come with his forces and was acting against Christ, and then the supremacy of grace shines forth, as He says, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The more you look into it, the more it affects you ; it is the moral greatness of Christ in the presence of wave after wave of bitter opposition and hatred. He rises above all and prays for His persecutors : " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He is preparing the way for the cities of refuge ; establishing the principle of them.

If we compare Ephesians with the early chapters of the Acts, it enables us to understand how the assembly, as formed by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, became the residence of that grace. It was not to go back to heaven with Him who brought it. The idea of Christ coming in, in that sense, is to leave here His fulness. The assembly is the fulness of Christ. The assembly was to be the residence of that which He set out in those few words, charged with such deep meaning, " Father, forgive them." It was

supreme grace. It is not simply in one person now; grace shone in Christ in *all* its fulness, "We have contemplated his glory," says one who loved and revered Him, "full of grace and truth," John 1 : 14. He was full of it! Grace first, and then truth. What a wonderful combination! It is said of Him, "In whom all the fulness was pleased to dwell"—who can take in such a thought? It is an expression conveying the greatness of His Person. It is that Person who is described as "full of grace and truth."

And then the same writer says, "Of his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace"—that is one wave after another. James says, "He giveth more grace." It flows from that reservoir, but with us it is a question of capacity, and the word comes to us as in Hebrews, "Lest any one fail of the grace of God."

Hagar is a type of one that failed of it. It is in connection with her that the idea of a well, representing the system of grace, is first seen in the Scriptures; it rises above man's will. It says the angel found her by the well; he *found* her there, and she saw God there. In Genesis 21 she has a son, they were both outcasts, but grace followed them. There came a voice from heaven, "Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is." And what a lad he was! Typically, he was a persecutor of Christ, and yet the grace of God was by them. Hagar's eyes were opened, and she saw a well of water and gave the lad drink; she partook of the grace, but she failed of it. She went to Egypt to get him a wife, she went to the world.

That is how the matter stands; they failed of the grace of God. To say the least, going to the world places your position in doubt; for how can any one speak of you as an example of grace if you are going to the world for a wife for yourself or for your son—or are seeking to provide for your children on that

line ? Ishmael had an Egyptian wife, and it was some of his posterity that purchased Joseph as a slave. He became an archer ; which implies long-distance fighting, conflict which has little sympathy or heart. The archers, it says, shot at Joseph. Thus as a sure result of failing of the grace of God, we become persecutors of Christ.

I wish now to show from the type in Deuteronomy how all this works out. We see it in the manner in which the subject of the cities of refuge is introduced here. The thought is mentioned elsewhere, but the presentation of it in Deuteronomy serves me in what I am seeking to bring before you ; that is, our qualification to be the residence of this grace, so that we may answer to the dispensation, and not be below the position set out in Ephesians. In Deuteronomy 19 : 1 we see the circumstances under which these cities should be selected : " When the Lord thy God hath cut off the nations . . . and thou succeedest them and dwellest," then " thou shalt separate three cities for thee." The explanation of the unforgiving spirit that is so often apparent with us, is the want of understanding and enjoying the position that God has given us. That is to say, there is hardness of spirit and unforgiveness, because of spiritual poverty. We are not, in that sense, great enough to forgive.

The principle of grace is that it rises above whatever there is in man. It takes us up whether good or bad, whether we are big or little sinners. The exceeding riches of grace rises above the worst kind of man or woman, rising above their guilt and subduing them, making them exponents of it, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus. As I have shown, the Lord was superior to the whole tide of evil in the expression of grace as He says, " Father, forgive them." There was one man by His side, a thief, who was touched ; the light of grace shone into his soul, and he said, " Remember me, Lord, when thou comest in thy

kingdom." He was alongside the flow of grace; it was there, and it flowed into his soul and subdued him. Though he was persecuting before, for it says he "cast the same in his teeth," grace overwhelmed him, and the Lord answers his desire: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise"! The man was lifted into the supreme place of blessing with Jesus—He says, "with me." Who can express the depth of feeling in the Lord when He said, "with me in paradise"? It is the triumph of grace!

What maintains us in this richness of grace? "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye by his poverty might be rich." It is rich people, in that sense, who become collectively the residence of this grace. And thus the dispensation is maintained at its proper level; the level of that wonderful passage in Luke 23.

So in Deuteronomy, in the type, Moses is instructing the people who are going into the land; it is his exercise that they might be in it like God, for they were the "sons of Jehovah." He was himself a very old man, and in this book he speaks of that land in which he himself fain would be—how he would grace it! Indeed, he was in it later, on the mount of transfiguration, and he was talking with Jesus. It was Moses speaking to the Lord, "with him," as if to call our attention to the fact that he was great enough to do such a thing. Think of the glory of that Person as He was transfigured before them! (Luke 9). The fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment white and glistering! And Moses and Elias were speaking with Him. Moses saw that goodly land, and Lebanon. He could not go in then, but he entered in now in this glorious fashion.

Here he says, "When the Lord God has cut off the nations," etc. Israel have the cities and the houses; they are set up in wealth in the land. We

understand the land, typically; it is God's *best* for us. God waters it with rain from heaven; it is a land of water-brooks; the beauty of all lands. God expatiates on the richness of that land, and they were now in it. Their enemies are contemplated as being cut off, and they are set up, as we may say, in heaven; not literally, of course, but heaven as it is realised now, which is what the type sets forth. They are set up in it in dignity, for they were sons of Jehovah.

These things must be understood spiritually; the saints are thus contemplated as in possession of God's best. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him." It is on that level, and refers to the most blessed things, all brought in for us by the Spirit, who is "the earnest of our inheritance." We are supposed in this type to be in this position and status of wealth. The assembly is to be the residence of grace.

The subject of the cities of refuge is not presented here as elsewhere, but in keeping with this book, so that we may understand that this principle of grace is to be present; there is to be the existence of it in "three cities." He mentions three first, which is peculiar to Deuteronomy. It says, "Thou shalt separate three cities . . . and thou shalt prepare thee a way." We have the cities in the land in all this richness; now he says, "prepare thee a way." There is the possibility of a man slaying another unintentionally. As the Lord Jesus said, "for they know not what they do"—it is not regarded as deliberate. The land is to be divided up so that these cities may be within running distance of the man-slayer. In other words, we are to consider them. Due care in this respect is to characterise Christians as forming the assembly.

It is worthy of note that the death of the high

priest is not mentioned in Deuteronomy; you are not to put *anything* in the way of the manslayer reaching the city of refuge. You must put the city so that he can run into it, even if it is a long way to go. In the antitype it is not literal, but how many have been turned aside by accident. The axe-head flies off; it is the defective instrument used. The epistle to the Romans is intended to make us good instruments; we are to be "instruments of *righteousness*." None such will have a head, so to speak, that will fly off and kill a man. If we take care of our instruments, no one will suffer.

The chapter is dealing with grace, and while the killing is not intentional it is most solemn, for the man is killed; his wife and children have to be taken account of. Still grace prevails, for every facility is afforded the manslayer to reach the city of refuge. The Holy Spirit says, "Thou shalt make thee a way"—a way so that he can easily get there before the avenger of blood overtakes him. You can see how this enters into our relations in the assembly. We are to move on the level of Ephesians: "Even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us." There must be no obstacle. The same applies to the sinner; God has made a way, as it is said, "There is forgiveness with thee."

Then there are the additional three cities; they contemplate expansion. "If the Lord enlarge thy coasts . . . thou shalt add three cities more" (*v.* 8). I have no doubt in the dispensational sense that refers to the extension of the testimony in Paul. The first three would be what existed at Jerusalem, "The Lord added to the assembly daily such as should be saved." That would refer to the cities of refuge; they were there; grace was residing there according to the early chapters of the Acts. Then later the apostle Paul always went to the Jews *first*; this would be in keeping with the other three cities; full room

was made for the Jews even in Rome. They went away and missed their opportunity, but there it was. Thus, dear brethren, if there is to be expansion, if there is to be increase, we must not let this principle be wanting, the principle of grace. We must keep pace with the work of God. Three is abundant evidence of anything ; twice three in the case before us is the superabounding grace of God. The more we are brought into the inheritance, the more the grace, and thus the dispensation is carried on at its proper level until the end.

MINISTERING TO THE WILL OF GOD

Remarks at a burial

IN THE HOUSE, LINLITHGOW, JUNE 13TH, 1930

ACTS **13** : 36 ; 1 CHRONICLES **29** : 26–30

IN our hymn, dear brethren, reference was made to *the will of God*, and this strikes one as peculiarly fitting to form a basis for our communications together at this time. As having known our beloved brother intimately for many years, one is impressed with the applicability of it to him and his part in the service of God.

In referring to the will of God, we are reminded of how prominently it occupied our Lord's mind as having become Man, and as Man in His service, and in view of His departure. One is affected in referring to the unspeakable depths of feeling which marked the Lord in facing death : " He was amazed," we are told, " and deeply depressed." So thoroughly had He taken up man's place, and so thoroughly did He understand the import of the will of God as to this position, that He felt it ; hence the deep agony, and the words : " Not my will, but thine be done."

In David, as foreshadowing all this, we have a remarkable example (which one believes corresponds with that set by our beloved departed brother), that he ministered to the will of God in his own generation. The Holy Spirit dwells on the life of David peculiarly. Although not, as we would speak to-day, a very long life, it was a life of compression, a life into which immense events were compressed. In referring to the idea of compression in such a path, one cannot but think of the compression of the life of Jesus, especially the three and a half years of His service. What a life ! What events of eternal import were

compressed into that life, and how in every moment of it He ministered to the will of God! What He was in private we must leave, but He was cast upon God from the outset. Every breath, every pulsation, every movement in that life was for the will of God. What that was to God, beloved, who but He can fully express? He took occasion at the end of thirty years to speak of it: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight." And what that scene in Gethsemane was, who but God knows fully? those moments of amazement, of depression, when He would at *all* costs minister to the will of God.

So to David, a man of like passions with ourselves, we have this beautiful tribute by the apostle Paul: "Having in his own generation ministered to the will of God, fell asleep." This is a greater thing than to minister to others, for it fills out what the mind of God delights in. So as I said, this is what marked our brother; not great exploits outwardly (for there may be these without ministering to the will of God), but steady adherence to and support of what pleased God. After all, it is what God has in a brother, that is the whole matter. "Fear God and keep his commandments," one has said, is "the whole matter." It is what accrues to God that will tell; it is what has told, beloved brethren, and what will tell in that day when things are manifested.

> "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the times that passed over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries."

With regard to our brother, I know of none who felt more keenly, current spiritual events amongst the saints of God. "The times that went over him" in all the years of his service involved serious crises and

conflicts, local and general, and I never knew him to fail of the mind of God, nor shirk the responsibility as to them that fell to him. Thus a younger generation may well imitate his faith, considering the issue of his conversation.

It is very beautiful that the Holy Spirit mentions such recorders of David's life as the prophets Samuel, Nathan and Gad. We may be assured that the sum total of that ministry to the will of God was gathered up faithfully for the food, the encouragement and the stimulation of after servants, as these books of Samuel, Nathan and Gad were read. To the same end I venture this afternoon to call attention to the ministry of our brother, what it was for the will of God. What a stimulation to ourselves to pursue the path of faith humbly, unostentatiously, but letting nothing miss us that ministers to the will of God that we may know how the will of God enters into the times that pass over us and minister to it. May the Lord help us, dear brethren, and comfort our beloved ones here, our dear bereaved sister especially.

REMARKS AT THE GRAVE

Acts 7 : 59, 60 ; 8 : 2

One is reminded by this solemn occasion of the place that burial has in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit has marked the subject. In Genesis 23 we have the account of the burial of Sarah, the first one recorded, and much mention is made of the purchase by Abraham of the possession of a sepulchre, as if God would mark off the thought of burial as belonging to faith. Throughout Genesis, from the chapter mentioned, it has a great place ; all the men of faith had it in mind ; not only the fact of burial, but the *place* of it ; and the place, as I said, was acquired on the principle of purchase, with money "current with the merchant." Not only was the

actual cave purchased in which the persons of faith were to be interred, but the field, as if God had anticipated the love of His people for their dead. It is suggested in our present position here, a place where we can meet, so that there may be an ample expression of affection and respect in the burial of our dead—not *the* dead—the burial of them is left; the Lord says: "Let the dead bury their dead." The Lord will have to say to all who have died in unbelief. They have had to do with Him here in the gospel period, but that does not end their relations with Him. He has rights in regard of the future over the dead, for they shall all stand before Him as He sits on the great white throne (Rev. 20)—a very solemn matter for those who are dead characteristically. Scripture is not occupied with their burial. Much was made of burial in Egypt, but what you find in the Scriptures is this, that where God asserted His will over man in the law, and there was disregard of that will, there was no burial; their carcases were strewn in the desert. Great pains are taken in the burials of those of the world to deprive death of its awfulness, but with regard to those who disregarded the will of God, those who did not hearken to the word because of unbelief, the Holy Spirit uses the most humiliating term, "their carcases were strewn in the desert"; whereas those of faith who died in the wilderness, such as Moses, Aaron and Miriam, were carefully buried. God Himself undertook to bury Moses, a most touching thing, showing the place that burial has in the divine thought. With regard to the saints, even the place of burial is of importance. Jude tells us that Michael disputed with the devil in regard to the body of Moses, as if the enemy would use, or misuse, the bodies of the saints. Unbelief brought out the humiliating spectacle of *carcases* strewn in the desert, but the bodies of the saints are never regarded in that way. "Many *bodies* of the

saints which slept arose, and entered into the holy city, and appeared unto many." This is recorded after the Lord's resurrection, for He must be pre-eminent in all things, and particularly so in regard to resurrection. " Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming."

It is said that Stephen kneeled down and prayed, saying: " Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." He maintained the character of the dispensation in this wonderful prayer, after saying, " Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Saying these words, he fell asleep. Then the saints, like ourselves to-day, carry him to his burial and make great lamentation over him. We are not here without feeling. One has been taken away from us who had part in this service, who ministered to the will of God in his generation, as we have already said, and we feel and mourn our loss. The more devout we are the more we feel it. But the Lord Jesus has received his spirit, as He received Stephen's, and our part is to bury him, as we now do, knowing that he will come forth in the resurrection of life when Christ comes for His own.

There was a young man who stood there and held the clothes of those who stoned the martyr—one who afterwards says of himself: " By the grace of God I am what I am." At a time like this God may have some young man (or more) in view, to take up the service laid down, to fill the void which has been made, whose heart the Lord has touched with the needed grace, that the testimony may be carried on !

READING AT THE ROOM

2 Samuel 12 : 18–23

J.T. This passage serves to illustrate David's submission to the will of God, and his acceptance of responsibility. We were impressed to-day with the presence of Saul at the death of Stephen, resulting

ultimately in the thread of the testimony being taken up by him. The fulness of what was expressed in Stephen—the heavenly side—was developed in Paul. I was thinking too of Solomon coming in to take up the service of God as David was removed. These cases indicate what God will do in our circumstances as responsibility is accepted. David accepted it; he lay upon the earth in submission to the will of God; but when the child was taken the will of God was completed on that point, and the sequel involves the carrying on of the testimony. Solomon comes in immediately; he comes in as responsibility is accepted. David evidently had hoped that God would raise up the child, but the will of God was different, and he submitted. Then he arose from the earth, which was his proper place, washed and anointed himself, changed his clothing and went into the house of the Lord and worshipped. Thus he ministered to the will of God under these circumstances. And he explains fully what governed him, the child would not return. But God would bring in another.

A.N. You mean that responsibility is taken up in relation to the continuance of the testimony?

J.T. That is what I thought. So Solomon comes in immediately, and the Lord loves him, and gives him a name, Jedidiah. That is the principle on which the testimony is carried on—in one whom the Lord loves. That was potential; the cause of the love would come out in due course. I was thinking specially of the principle of accepting responsibility. God would place it on us, as illustrated in Hagar. She is the first with whom is connected the idea of the system of grace, illustrated in the well. She takes her son and casts him under a shrub to die. But the word is, "God has heard the voice of the lad *where he is*." Where the actual need is, and where the cry goes up, God hears. She is directed to take up the lad, and hold him in her arms, that was her responsi-

bility. If we take up and hold, as it were, in our hands before God, what is our distinctive responsibility, He will come in and answer. So Hagar's eyes are opened to the well, she draws from it, and the lad lives.

A.N. It is one whom "the Lord loved" that carries on the testimony.

J.T. That is so. The Lord has His eye on the young men and young women. The testimony is to be continued, but on this principle of the acceptance of responsibility. Indeed, that is the principle on which the Lord Jesus became man. So God put it on Hagar to take up the lad in her hands, instead of leaving him under the shrub.

A.N. It would connect itself with what you remarked earlier to-day; there is the submission to the will of God, but there is the ministering to the will of God. Hagar was on that line, and David was on that line, ministering to the will of God, which is really the continuance of the testimony.

J.T. Hagar had a great opportunity to minister to the will of God, but while she filled her flask and gave the lad drink, and he revived and grew, she took a wife for him from Egypt, which spoilt the whole position. Not so with David, with him self-judgment was present, and Solomon comes in and the Lord loves him.

F.W.B. What place do you give to sovereignty in all this? With regard to Saul, God chose him to be a vessel.

J.T. The sovereignty of God underlies everything. We are "come to mount Zion." But it was no accident that Saul was present at the death of Stephen; he undoubtedly got an impression he never lost. Saul was holding the clothes of those who stoned the martyr, and he "was consenting." Note, he not only held the clothes, but he was consenting.

God can act on one although as yet there may be no outward evidence that he is a vessel.

F.M. You referred to Abraham last night in connection with the same line of things. He accepted responsibility, and so Isaac comes in.

J.T. That is how it worked out. God gave him the covenant of circumcision, and then "went up from Abraham"; so that he is left as to what he will do. He brings in circumcision in every detail, and then God came in in company. In the course of that wonderful time (Gen. 18) they had, He would bring out *again* that Isaac was to be born. That is the principle upon which God acts; Isaac is given to an obedient man. And if Isaac—typically Christ—is given, the world must go, so Sodom is destroyed. All this came out in that meeting, but all was connected with the obedience of Abraham.

F.W.B. I wish you would say a little more about submission to the will of God and ministering to His will. Does one flow out of the other?

J.T. I think so. We see how beautifully David acted. He lay on the earth, as if he accepted that as his due; that was where he came from. It was the acceptance of the judgment of God. But the will of God goes beyond the judgment of God; His judgment is involved in it, but His grace and counsel are also involved in it, and David comes into all this. He rises from the earth when the child is taken, washes and anoints himself, changes his garments—he is taking on a new character under God's eye, and then he enters into the house of the Lord and worships. He is ministering to the will of God.

Rem. There is a progressive tendency, a deepening sense of responsibility, in the measure in which God is known.

F.W.B. So that ministering to the will of God is not only that I say that will is right, but there is

something for God's pleasure in what I am doing, a fragrance and a savour.

J.T. "By the which will we are sanctified." That is what comes out here; sanctification is seen in David.

C.S.S. In all our circumstances, if we seek to be in submission to the will of God, and to be here answering to His pleasure, blessing, enlargement and worship will be the outflow. Might I ask for a little more about what you mean by submitting to the will of God?

J.T. I think he submits to the will of God in lying on the earth. He was saying virtually: "It is a question of God's will whether the child lives or otherwise; whatever it may be, I accept it." That was ministering to it, but negatively so. But when he arose from the earth, washed and anointed himself and entered into the house of God, he was ministering to it positively. God had no pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but Christ came to do His will—that was where the pleasure was. But it is by that same will that we are sanctified, by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ; and what follows is the holiest—liberty to approach God.

Ques. Is there any connection between this and Acts 13, where they ministered to the Lord?

J.T. There it is the same thought. They ministered to the Lord and fasted; it was the kind of thing that was in the assembly *there*. It was to the credit of the assembly that they were there, that God was obtaining His service there.

A.N. Your point, I understand, is that on the one hand there is submission to the will of God whatever that might be; but in ministering to the will of God it is like the ram of consecration; there is energy, you take it up definitely. It is more than submission, there is energy connected with it.

J.D. Is it in the sense of furthering? Not only

are you not opposing it, but sympathetic with it and furthering it.

J.T. So that God has pleasure in you.

C.S.S. Submission would be the first thought, and ministering to the will of God second ?

J.T. Submission is in itself ministering to the will of God negatively, but there is the positive thing. In a supreme way the Lord ministered to the will of God, " Not my will, but thine be done." That is the supreme expression of it. But that is not all. The resurrection of Christ and all that has come out in Him since, is ministering to the will of God. If the Father has glorified Him immediately, He glorifies the Father. In Ephesians 1 we have, " the good pleasure of his will," " the mystery of his will," and " the counsel of his own will."

A.N. You get the two sides in Isaiah 53 : " He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." But on the other hand : " When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." In the one there is submission, but in the other He takes up the pleasure of God.

J.T. Quite, in a positive way. I think it is very beautiful to see the intelligence of David ; he was beyond the letter of the law, he was in the spirit of the thing. He knew God. He says : " While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept ; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live ? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast ? Can I bring him back again ? " It is right that we should mourn and feel things, but God alone can meet such a situation as existed and He will do it in a positive way. That is what comes out in Solomon. That is what has been going on since Pentecost. Stephen died a young

man, I judge, and most of the apostles died comparatively young. Even Paul was not a very old man, though he calls himself "Paul the aged"; that would no doubt allude to the compression of his life. The principle is, bringing in others, and this witnesses to the patience of God in continuing His testimony.

C.S.S. Committing it to Timothy and Timothy to faithful men, that there should always be something for God.

J.T. Our exercise should be for a Saul, for a Solomon—those whom God can bring in quite unexpectedly, because they both came in an unexpected and unusual way. The patience, power and resources of God are seen in all this.

J.D. In Acts 15 Paul has an exercise to visit the brethren and see how they are getting on, and feeling arose between him and Barnabas. Immediately afterwards Timothy comes to light, of whom he says: "I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state"—as if God took account of this ministry to His will, and continued it by bringing in Timothy.

J.T. That is a very apt illustration of what we have been saying.

F.W.B. To go back to your illustration of Hagar, do you think taking up the lad in her arms is illustrative of one taking up one's responsibilities in connection with the assembly?

J.T. That is what I was thinking. It is remarkable how the principle of local responsibility runs through Scripture. "God has heard the voice of the lad where he is." Where was he? Thrown under a shrub. Many of us do that, we just let things go by the board that we cannot manage. She said: "Let me not see him die," but she has to go and hold him in her hands. He was a good-sized boy, fourteen years of age. She would feel that weight, and the more she felt it, the more she would look to

God. Infidels may ridicule the idea of her holding a boy of that age. We do not know how big he may have been, but he was fourteen years of age anyway. He could persecute others too. But there he was, he was Abraham's son, and because of that he is an object of divine care. As soon as she takes him up in her arms, she is shown the well.

The next thing, in Genesis 21, is Abraham's assertion that he had dug the well. He was on the line of the testimony, and that well was essential to it. He was in power; he could rebuke Abimelech, king of the Philistines, and he gave him seven ewe-lambs. "These be a witness unto me that I have digged this well." The seven ewe-lambs represent the subject spirit of Christ, but there is power in it. You will never get into what is wrong in that spirit. You will be a son of peace. It is in that spirit the testimony is to go on. It was not found in Hagar and Ishmael, but it was found in Abraham, "the father of all them that believe."

F.W.B. Is not that the greatest difficulty, the spirit in which we take up a thing?

J.T. I am sure of it. The seven ewe-lambs are standing over against Abimelech and his military man. On Abraham's side the war is to be carried on in the spirit typified in these lambs.

A.N. "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" But the Lord says: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." You are on the line of saving, but it is by your spirit that you help.

J.T. And in the next chapter (Luke 10) the Lord sends out the seventy, and their great concern would be to find "a son of peace."

F.W.B. A spirit like that does not mean weakness, but power.

J.T. You would not give way an inch where the truth was concerned, but you would be yielding with your neighbours. "Let your gentleness be known of all men," Phil. 4 : 5.

F.W.B. And even in standing for the truth your spirit would be like Christ.

J.T. It is very remarkable that the seven ewe-lambs are mentioned three times in a verse or two, as if that were the point. "These be a witness that I have digged this well." The well is the thing that you have to rely on to carry on the testimony. Hagar did not go on with it, she went to Egypt, but Abraham went on with it.

Rem. While at one period of your history you may answer to Hagar taking up her responsibility, you may utterly break down later.

J.T. Indeed, that is the solemn thing; so the Spirit of God goes on to show how with Abraham the idea is carried on, the well is there, and the seven ewe-lambs.

Ques. What would be the present application of the well? I was thinking of the Philistines filling up the wells.

J.T. I think the well alludes to the system of grace in which the Holy Spirit is active and dominant. It was first presented to the Jew, symbolised in Hagar and Ishmael, but they did not value it. It came out to the Gentiles later. The woman of Samaria exemplifies the idea. She goes to the world, but not as Hagar did; she goes and says: "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?"—and they came. She is delivered from the world and she draws others out of the world, and makes a place for Christ. He abides with them two days.

Ques. Do you think the spirit of John the baptist would help? "He must increase, but I must

decrease." He had answered to his responsibilities, and having done so he was content to go out of sight.

J.T. Yes. He gladly makes way for Christ, "who baptises with the Holy Spirit." He takes away the sin of the world and baptises with the Holy Spirit. By Him the will of God is thus established universally both negatively and positively.

PERFECTION

NUMBERS 15 : 1–22 ; DEUTERONOMY 26 : 1–11

IN reading these scriptures I am thinking of a passage in the New Testament which enjoins us to " go on unto perfection." The passage is preceded by a reference to the ' senses' ; these being exercised mark manhood, or ' full age,' so that there is discernment of good and evil.

To develop this subject I have selected Numbers as being the account of the experience of Israel in the wilderness. The wilderness, being viewed as a scene contrary to us, brings out the worst features unless we are on our guard in self-judgment ; and if we are on our guard, kept by the power of God through faith, the wilderness brings out our best features. As Scripture says : " to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or not," Deut. 8 : 2.

Numbers 15 begins thus : " When ye be come into the land." It is not ' if.' You might expect *that* from the previous chapters, but there is no ' if ' in the counsels of God. They *must go* through. So that in Ephesians 1 we have " the good pleasure of his will," " the mystery of his will," and " the counsel of his will." The will of God enters into all these things, and the love and power of God are behind that. Thus we have here, " When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you." First, there is the certainty of the people going in. *Who* the individuals are is not the point. Those in the counsels of God are going in, and as there they will serve or worship Him. Everything is in your favour now, as in a land flowing with milk and honey, watered by the rain of heaven, possessing

waterbrooks, etc. The God of it is in your heart and you will bring Him an offering, but in this you are to show that you are *regular* in your growth. Our offering represents our thought of God. God loves that thought, however small. I would say to young people, The smallest thought of God is delightful to Him ; you come before Him with it in perfect liberty. But your meat offering, oil and drink offering must correspond ; you thus do not appear to be a " young man " or a " father " when you are only a little one. Some young brothers, having keen minds, take in all they hear, and speak like old brothers ; but the meat and drink offerings are lacking. The kind of man you are in everyday life is implied in these, and you cannot leave that out when appearing before God. If these things—the meat offering, oil and wine—do not accompany in the prescribed proportions the creature presented, it will be manifest that the offerer has not developed *regularly* ; his intelligence is out of proportion with his general practical state of soul. He speaks well, but what about his everyday life ? The meat offering mingled with oil denotes that it is in keeping with his intelligence. And then the drink offering indicates the joy he affords to God, and correspondingly among the brethren. Our ability to speak or take part in the assembly may be out of keeping with our spirit and everyday life, and so the meat offering and drink offering are to be in keeping with the animal presented. The animal itself represents our conception of Christ, but the meat and drink offerings must correspond. I urge this upon all as most important, as showing how we are to be before God in the assembly. God looks upon your offering, but looks also to see that everything else about you is in keeping with it.

There is an ascending scale in the passage. Thus in verse 6 a ram is mentioned. That would mean a person fully matured and possessing energy. The

ram is a fully-developed creature. If there be energy of mind, of soul, of voice, there must be the incense in keeping with the perfect humanity of Christ. You have one-third with the ram instead of one-fourth as with the offering mentioned previously.

Then you come to the bullock, which suggests a very large conception of Christ. It is what the apostle had in mind in his prayer in Ephesians 3 : that we may " know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." We are to go on to this. But the meat and drink offerings must be in accordance. These things are practical if we are to have a right conception. We must not be out of proportion ; we must grow uniformly. God looks for *perfection*.

Then there is the heave offering, verse 19, " Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough." In a cake you come to a *whole* thought. The whole thought of God is presented in Christ, who is the Word ; what is in His mind. Now God looks for a corresponding effect in us, what He will have in His land. He brings us into it in this passage. First it is our entering, " When ye be *come* into the land." Then there is the thought of *God bringing* me in. God loves my coming in because I value it, but if He brings me in, that is *His power*, *His love*. In Ephesians the thought is that He brings us in. His primary thought was that He should bring them in and plant them in the mountain of His inheritance ; Exod. 15 : 17. I commend the thought that He should bring you in, a whole person. Now it is not three-tenths of flour, but dough. The wheat is not only ground, it is kneaded, referring to the exercise of soul I have gone through in relation to the whole thought of God. I have developed the exercise in the light of the full thought of God in Christ. Philippians answers to this. How much do we know of Philippians ? The epistle shows how we may be practically conformed to what God presents in

Christ; this implies energy. Paul laboured to be in every way like Christ, to be found in Him and have Him for gain. At Pentecost two loaves were to be brought out of the houses of the people and presented to God. What we are to be for God is worked out in Paul's experience, seen in Philippians. The apostle was wholly given up to one thought, answering to the 'cake' here. God's thought for every believer is in Christ, and this is seen in Philippians in a man of like passions as ourselves. The cake offered was to be of the first-fruits. Many yield themselves partly to God, but He wants us wholly, so that in each He should have a whole idea corresponding with Christ, and this is what the cake typifies here.

I now turn to Deuteronomy 26, wishing particularly to speak of the basket of first-fruits. Deuteronomy is specially preparation for the land. The chapter contemplates Israel in the inheritance, possessing it and dwelling therein; and thus to present of *all* the first-fruits unto Jehovah, not simply one part. "When thou art come into the land . . . thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth." What a variety there would be in such a land! What about *all* the fruit of the land? Have we ever stopped to ponder what the land means? It is heaven as it is apprehended and realised *now*; Christ there known in the heart by faith. And it is to be entered into, possessed and dwelt in; the saint is to dwell there, taking of all of the fruit. What rich variety! Most of us have to speak more or less objectively. Like Moses, we only get a peep into it. But the grapes of Eshcol told their own tale of the fruitfulness of Canaan.

Now the person of the offerer is in view as a basket; it is not a cake, but a containing vessel. We find ourselves extremely leaky; we easily forget the most precious things presented to us. Divine things can only be kept securely by the Holy Spirit, as the

apostle says, "Keep, by the Holy Spirit, which dwells in us, the good deposit entrusted." If I go into Canaan and get a taste, it is by the Holy Spirit I retain it. The believer is thus the basket. There is the responsible man and there is the man of purpose. "The priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of Jehovah thy God." The priest takes it out of the offerer's hand. It is a spiritual transaction. The believer is here typified in a dual sense; as having a responsible history, and as in the purpose of God. In the former connection he makes the confession as to what his father was, etc.; in the latter he is the basket full of the precious fruits of Canaan. We must understand all this, and the spiritual transaction of which I have spoken, if we are to be rightly in the assembly of God. The priest takes the basket out of the man's hand containing the first-fruits of Canaan and sets it down before the altar of Jehovah. This is a most instructive and important matter. Paul may be taken as an example. He speaks in 2 Corinthians 12 about things treasured in his heart. He had been up in heaven fourteen years before. He was there as "a man in Christ." Wonderful thought! It refers to what we shall be eternally. "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not, or out of the body I know not, God knows) such a one caught up to the third heaven . . . and heard unspeakable things said." We may know a good deal, but there is much that we do not know; it is, however, a comfort that God knows, and believers are to be "filled to all the fulness of God." Thus we see in Paul, abstracted as a man in Christ, the idea of the basket handed over and before God, containing the first-fruits of the land. Christ takes all the baskets, as it were, into His own hands and sets them before God. On the other hand, the offerer, viewed as a responsible man, makes a becoming

confession. He owns his past history, and God's wonderful deliverance of himself and His people. "A Syrian ready to perish was my father . . . and he went down into Egypt . . . and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers . . . the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt . . . and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey." *We* say, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love . . . hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." There is the acknowledgment of what we were, and of what God in His great love has done for us. He has taken us out of one status and condition and set us down in another. He has set us in the heavenlies in Christ. The Israelite brought his first-fruits and set them down before Jehovah and worshipped Him, rejoicing in every good thing which He gave him. In like manner the believer to-day who apprehends what God has done in Christ worships the Father in spirit and in truth.

So you can see, dear brethren, what God brings us to, what these types mean for us, so that we should go on to full growth. Standing still leads to rebellion. We are urged, as I said, to go on to the things that belong to full growth; to know what it is to be in Christ, and enter on our heavenly portion. These things belong to us, but, alas! the most precious things are often most neglected. Our wisdom therefore will be seen as we go in for these things, divine love having made them our own; we shall thus be prepared when the Lord comes and raptures us to Himself.

WHAT GOD REQUIRES AND WHAT HE PROVIDES

REVELATION 7 : 1–17

THE first part of the chapter read suggests the number that God requires for the accomplishment of His purpose ; the second part contemplates unlimitedness as to those who avail themselves of what He provides. I thought we might profitably look at the chapter from these two viewpoints. What He requires is dictated by the demands of His throne ; what He provides in a limitless way stands related to the love of His heart, and we go out in the gospel on that line, but what God has in His purpose for administration He necessarily limits. It is not that a hundred and forty-four thousand indicates a limit, but there is such a thing as limitation in the divine scheme—*countability*.

The divine requirements from the standpoint of sovereign counsel will be met, and I thought we might profitably consider first whether we are ranged under the head of those who are countable, because from the standpoint of administration, divine administration, love is essential in those who have part—those who are to be used—so that they may be employed at the divine pleasure, according to the very great divisibility of the number given.

The company are sealed as bondmen with the seal of the living God. I am not taking it up prophetically, but as in a moral sense applying at any time—that God has His own number, and that He seals them as His bondmen. It says, " Until we shall have sealed the bondmen of our God upon their foreheads." They are to be marked off with the seal of the living God, in a position where it is readable publicly. The first thing, therefore, is that there are four angels

standing upon the four corners of the earth ; that is, God is acting providentially to make way for this movement, a principle which runs through Scripture, that in this service, administrative service, He orders things on the earth providentially and universally. For instance, in our own times, we have had the Great War, and now the great financial stringency which exists. Believers should be in the light of God's actions, knowing that He is in control of these matters with a view to His service. So that the winds—the Satanic winds—are not allowed to agitate, as it says, the earth, the sea, nor any tree. That is to say, government has been maintained, an ordered condition of things, and the masses that would rise up if they had the opportunity are controlled. And then the trees are persons of distinction, and these are all allowed to stand, the wind of Satan is not allowed to blow upon them. The end is that God might seal His bondmen on their foreheads ; that is the point for the moment, that God seeks those whom He can use administratively, and He wishes to put His mark on them. The mark being on the forehead would indicate that in the Lord's service we are to be marked off, not only privately as we meet together in our meeting rooms and in our houses, but in our public capacities—that we are to be *marked off*. It is in contrast to the mark of the beast. It is the seal of the living God, which would imply that we are living spiritually, and that it is apparent in a public way. And then we have an intensified idea of administration. A hundred and forty-four thousand is mentioned first, and then the sub-division, showing that it is an intensified thought. We have to sub-divide it afterwards. Instead of giving the tribes first and then the total, we have the total first, showing that God will have His number.

The purpose of administration in regard to God's activities at the present time is that He might have

the means of unfolding His thoughts and administering what He has to administer. That is to say, to apply to our administration, it is the gospel and the assembly. The countability is very important, because it suggests the order in which God purposes. Whilst He is ready to take us on in service, yet He has got His number, and He will not go beyond His number. So the Levites, you will remember, were numbered before they were able to exercise any choice, that is, at the age of one month. God exercises His right to get His number. It is *God's* doing, and from His side He asks no permission, He exercises His sovereign rights. The number is very divisible, too. You can divide this number into a great many parts, and I think that this is to remind us that *love* is existent in us, so that we can be divided according to the exigencies of divine wisdom. We are at His disposal, so that God has a free hand to send *you* as He pleases, and to send *me*, according to the exigencies of His administration, that we are at His disposal. Then God is the God of order. We have the principle in the gospels. "The Lord has need of him," in connection with the colt; Mark 11 : 3. We do not know how many others were in the Lord's mind, but He said He had need of *him*. It would mean that He had a certain need, and He wishes to have that requirement met. We should have the exercise to be prepared to be taken up, to be able to say, "Here am I, send me," Isa. 6 : 8. When God says, Whom shall I send? You are there. But then He would give you to understand that He has a right to you. It is not voluntary; levitical service is not voluntary, it is on the principle of conscription. What is emphasised is that God has got His number. The total is given before the tribal subdivisions. I think He would remind us that we cannot hold Him to any previous arrangement. You get a variety of arrangements in the tribes. It is remarkable how they are

arranged and re-arranged, but God would remind us that this is His right, and that He cannot be held to any previous arrangement. The number is to bring out flexibility ; there may be a different arrangement from that to which we are accustomed, God may rearrange, He may drop one out and put another in his place, so that we cannot compare the present time with a previous era of administration. God may change the order, but the result will be according to His counsels. And then in connection with the seal, I think it is the way it works out in life. The history of Israel shows without question God's right to take His people out of Egypt, and there is no question of His right to take any of us out of the world, but then He intends that there should be a witness to that right in us, not only that we are called, but there should be a permanent witness in us to the fact that God has a right to us. I think that " If Christ be in you, the body is dead on account of sin, but the Spirit life on account of righteousness " (Rom. 8 : 10) is practically the seal of the living God. The seal is the evidence of right of ownership—that we are bought. It is the evidence of redemption, but inasmuch as it is on the forehead, it is for everyone to take account of, that I am the property of Another. " Ye are not your own, for ye have been bought with a price," 1 Cor. 6 : 19, 20. Being governed inwardly by divine thoughts, it would be seen outwardly. There is One who has been marked off by God, and " If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one who practises righteousness is begotten of him," 1 John 2 : 29. There is evidence that I belong to Another ; I belong to God. Christianity implies that no-one has a claim on me but God. Of course, there are the natural relationships, the claims of parents, and so on, but I belong to God.

The will of God is to have a number so under His hand that He can use it in love ; He can use it for

Himself. I believe that is the idea. The number that God has in view is divisible because love is there. If love is not there, we are not divisible, we will go our own way like Jonah. God is putting in His claim to His people. He is asserting His rights, and there should be the evidence of His ownership over us in a practical way. And so the winds are held up, although there may be great pressure—until the hundred and forty-four thousand are sealed. God is doing something. God is operating and administering. Men are doing much, but *God* is doing much, and His administrative service continues to the end of the dispensation. It is something on the line of " Him has the Father sealed, even God," John 6 : 27. The Father made it perfectly evident who that blessed One was, " Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth ! " (Isa. 42 : 1), and He knows how to make it perfectly evident who these bondmen are. The rights of God have a universal bearing, but in those that are sealed those rights are maintained in testimony.

The four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds, show that God has right to the whole area, the whole earth. It is His universal claim on the elements or material things, and the number sealed corresponds with that in persons ; a hundred and forty-four thousand corresponds with that. It is a universal thought. He has got a number that He can send anywhere ; He has got the whole domain under His hand, and the angels are holding back the winds, and God has this number available to use at His pleasure. He cannot use us at His pleasure unless we love, not only loving Him, but loving one another, because the number is divisible, for He can take out any two or three, or any six or twelve, or any one. He can divide up in that way, He can divide up into a remarkable number of divisions. If He wants twelve, well, He can take

out twelve. You are entirely at His disposal. If you look at your brother you feel : ' I do not want to leave him behind, I do not want to go off by myself to get rid of him, I would like to have him with me.' I am exercised by love in any thing I do, so that I am like God in service. I would refer to Peter in John 21. He says, " I go to fish," that is what Peter said. That was not number twelve. And others went with him. How many went off ? Seven, which is not an administrative number at all. But they came under the Lord's direction before they cast the net. In Luke 5 the Lord said, " Draw out into the deep water and let down your nets for a haul " (*v.* 4), but in John 21 : 6, it is " Cast the net at the right side of the ship and ye will find." And they caught a hundred and fifty-three great fishes. It is the size, the quality of the fishes, that John takes account of. The boat was not sinking ; there was not the vastness of the numbers. The Lord says, " Bring of the fishes which ye have now taken "— that is those that could be used. But this movement of Peter and the others in Tiberias stands over against what we have been saying. " I go to fish " that is what I am doing, and I need others with me. This is what underlies all the religious denominations which exist now. One man goes off, and others go with him, and I have no doubt that numbers in that would indicate what is evil. Here you have seven going off by themselves. The Lord, of course, saves them, but it indicates the kind of thing that is current, party or sectarian movements. It was a good thing they " took nothing " before the Lord comes to them ; it was their salvation, so to speak.

In Acts 1 we see Peter standing up in the midst of the brethren, and there were only eleven apostles, there was one short. They leave the selection of the twelfth to God, and so when Peter stood up to preach there were twelve of them. We could take

Philip as a good illustration of divisibility. The angel directs him to go down into the desert, and he goes, but the sequel shows how honoured he was. The Spirit takes him on, and he gets a wonderful result, and then it says that the Spirit of the Lord caught him away! It is one of the most remarkable things accorded to a servant, meaning that he was so delightful in his service that the Holy Spirit took charge of him entirely. He must have had a remarkable time when he was raptured; the Spirit of the Lord caught him away! The Holy Spirit carries him to a known position. Everything is perfectly ordered in God's working. It says, "And Philip was found at Azotus, and passing through he announced the glad tidings to all the cities till he came to Cæsarea," Acts 8 : 40. It is not recorded that he does any work in Cæsarea, that was reserved for Peter, but he went as far as that place which, I think, bears out what we are saying. The man that God had in mind for that work was Peter, and they had to wait for him; Acts 10 : 5. From the time government has been set up on the earth, it has been a problem with man to know how to carry on, and I am sure there has never been a time when it was more difficult than now. Authority is so weakened among the nations, that it is evident on every hand that it is with great difficulty that they carry on. Of course, we pray for them so that they may carry on, but in the presence of that weakness, we have the witness to God's administrative number by which *God* carries on. *God* is carrying on, and He is restraining the winds. It is good to remember that there is such a thing as angelic service, and that God answers the prayers of His people. God will answer us and modify things for us. If God has said that He will do certain things for us, we can base our prayers on that. "*I* also will keep thee out of the hour of trial," Rev. 3 : 10. We are entitled to make that a

basis of prayer, and that there should be a way made for the testimony, too. In Genesis 10 we have Shem's posterity given in relation to the other two sons of Noah. That is the posterity in which the testimony is vested. Shem was placed specially. Then we have the building of Babel, and God coming down to see it, to see what men did, and then the scattering of men. Shem's posterity or line is then again taken up, as if God were to say to us: Now I have removed what Satan would use to hinder the testimony, so that we can go on again. And the line runs right on to Abraham, and down.

We see in the second part of Revelation 7 how victory is there—a great multitude which no man could number who hold themselves as for God. It is what men do, how the divine provision is availed of, and it is "a great multitude." "After these things I saw, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palm branches in their hands. And they cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb" (*vv.* 9, 10). And then in verse 13 one of the elders says to him, "These who are clothed with white robes, who are they, and whence came they?" and he goes on to say, "These are they who come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb." That is, they are people who have availed themselves of what God provides. There is nothing said about preaching, or any agency employed to help them. It is what they themselves have done, they have washed their robes themselves. Earlier we have, "To him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood" (Rev. 1 : 5), that is what *we* say. The Lord has done it for us. But the point here is that

they do it themselves. How did they do it? The passage does not tell us, the point is that they *did* it. As I was remarking, there is nothing said about any preaching or service or help in this connection. It is, I think, to remind us that God provides, and we avail ourselves of what He provides, and then He honours us for that. The robes would be dignified garments. Here it is in the blood of the Lamb they have washed them and made them white. They were not content to have a partial washing, they have made them white; and then they had victory, they had palms! showing that on our side we avail ourselves to the full measure of what is provided. The robes would indicate personal dignity, and being made white, they would bear witness to the efficacy of the blood of the Lamb.

I think that perhaps Peter corresponds with the first part of the chapter, and John's line with the latter part, persons who can do things in spiritual instinct. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night." They correspond with the bondmen in the first part, but they come in on the line of having done things themselves. The two sides go together, sovereign election and then our doing things ourselves to correspond with that, and to have part in the service. No one would use the blood of the Lamb save God had wrought in him. They did it themselves, and came in for this great dignity. All the angels and the elders and the four living creatures are round about them. God has great pleasure in people who avail themselves of what He provides, those who do things themselves and are not looking for others to do it for them.

In chapter 22 it says, "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and that they should go in by the gates into the city" (*v.* 14). Here it is they that wash (present tense) their robes, they *do* it. It is characteristic,

not that they have done it, but they *do* it. It does not say in this passage that they do it by the blood. They wash their robes to have right to enter the gates of the city. That is to say, you come into fellowship on the ground that you wash your robes and no one has any right to question you because you have a right to come in. In the latter part of chapter 7 they have gone through the great tribulation, they have done the thing themselves, and they have got palms ! Then the interest of heaven in them is very remarkable. It says, " And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, Amen : Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and strength, to our God, to the ages of ages. Amen " (*vv.* 11, 12), and that shows what heaven thinks of believers who do things themselves, and who do not pay others to do things for them. This sets aside every element of priestcraft where others do things for you. You are to do them yourself, and heaven is delighted. And then it says in verse 15, " and he that sits upon the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them." So that they are brought into the most honoured position. " They shall not hunger any more, neither shall they thirst any more, nor shall the sun at all fall on them, nor any burning heat ; because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall lead them to fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes " (*vv.* 16, 17). That is very fine ! That is for people who do things for themselves, who avail themselves of what God provides, and avail themselves of it to the full. Spreading His tabernacle over them would mean the way in which He brings them into very great nearness. Peter says to the man in Acts 9 : 34, " Rise up, and make thy couch for thyself." That is the line. God

has great delight in people who do that, who make their beds for themselves. No one can say, by way of excuse, I am not among the number sealed, but I have to regard the number that God employs, and then, as availing myself of what God provides, He intimates that there is no limit, a company that no one can number.

In announcing the gospel we do not limit the number. There is no movement of exultation recorded in regard to the hundred and forty-four thousand, but it is the people who do things themselves that call forth movement in heaven. It is the brother or sister who takes what God provides and does things that brings about the movement in heaven. This should be a great help, I think, to people who expect others to do the work. What are *you* doing ? There is something available to you, and what are you doing with it ? The person who uses what is available draws out the delight of heaven ! Think of all the angels coming out to you to show their approval of what you are doing ! Making use yourself of what is available, you come into this, for God would intimate to every person on earth that this is available to him. He has no limitations on that line and the result is that it all fits in with His counsels.

THE LORD LOOKING ROUND

MARK 3 : 5 ; 11 : 11 ; 3 : 31–35

I WAS thinking, dear brethren, of the action of the Lord spoken of in these three passages, of *looking round.*

We also have in the Scriptures mention of His *turning* round, one notable instance being the sorrowful moment when He stood before the high priest and Simon Peter denied Him. As the cock crew, it is said by Luke, the Lord turned round and looked at Peter ; Luke 22 : 61. If it were merely the fact that He looked at him, the action of turning round need not have been mentioned, but the action denotes the great interest which the Lord had in an erring one, even in that supreme moment of sorrow in which there was before Him the most intense suffering, well known to Him in anticipation, and which would necessarily occupy Him. It had, indeed, as we know, occupied Him as recorded earlier, for He prayed with the deepest earnestness and intentness in regard to the cup that He was about to drink. It had not left His mind as a passing matter, it was a supreme matter that entered into that moment, that governed that moment, and never was lost sight of by the Lord, and yet we are told that He turned round to look at Peter, at an erring follower or disciple ! And the movement and the look brought about the desired end. In the Lord's account it was well worth while to turn aside, as it were, from what was so intense in His spirit, and look on an erring disciple. Such is the restoring grace of the Lord. He is always a Man of great affairs. Joseph represents Christ as a man of great affairs, occupied all day ; he came in at noon to dine. There were twelve hours in the day, and he filled them out, and so with the Lord, He was

always a Man of great business. We read of Him "Upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1 : 3), but now particularly occupied in the supervision, superintendence, protection and support of the testimony here involving the assembly. But He is always ready to turn aside and look upon an erring one. It may be there is such a one here.

The Lord would turn aside to look on you. It brought about the desired end in Peter's case for, we are told, he went out and wept bitterly.

We have other instances too, beloved, of the Lord's movements in the way of turning, movements which fit in even at this very minute. Luke again tells us that He turned towards His disciples, having spoken to His Father; Luke 10 : 23. In John's gospel He spoke to the disciples in chapters 13, 14, 15 and 16, every word and sentence being full of affection and holy significance, and then He turned His eyes toward heaven. He lifted up His eyes to heaven, having spoken these things to *them*, having opened up His heart and communicated to them what was there for them, indicating the place they had there, for they were on the breast-plate. You will remember that the saints are, figuratively, according to their birth, on the shoulders of the high priest, and tribally on the breast-plate. The Lord records us according to our birth, according to our generation, in the order of it, and then He records us as set in relation to one another according to counsel, not Reuben first, but Judah first. That is how the saints are on the breast-plate. They are there in their tribal relations, and it is in that character, I believe, they are on the Lord's heart as He lifts up His eyes to the Father in heaven. "He lifted up His eyes to heaven," John 17 : 1. With what delight the Father's eyes met those of the Son as they were thus lifted up, beloved! What a scene, what a spectacle for the Father! "Father," He says, "The hour is come; glorify thy Son, that

thy Son may glorify thee." That was after He had spoken to the disciples, but in Luke 10 He speaks to the Father, and then He turns towards the disciples. I think that is how matters stand. He is our Advocate with the Father, we are told ; all our affairs are looked after up there, a very touching, encouraging and establishing fact, going even as far as sins. " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father," and *who* is He ? " Jesus Christ the righteous," 1 John 2 : 1. But if He looks towards the Father in that way, He looks towards us, and in Luke 10 it is to tell them that their eyes were blessed because of what they were seeing. The Lord thus would assure us that things are being presented to us that the most honoured servants in the Old Testament never saw. We are very slow to believe, dear brethren, the greatness of the moment, what is to be seen and heard. " Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see," He says, but it was as having turned towards them ; Luke 10 : 23. Need I say that the Lord is toward us ? That that holy, glorious countenance is towards us at this moment. It is an auspicious moment when the Lord would minister to us, not with His back to us, but with His face towards us. John in the Revelation tells us that he heard a voice behind him—not that John's own attitude was out of order, for he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day—but he heard the voice behind him, as if to call him out of the region of his own privilege into the region of the government of God, so that John has to turn back. He turned to see the voice, we are told, showing how intimately in his mind the idea of the voice was connected with the Person. A person's voice is really *himself*, in that sense. So that he turned to see the *voice* ; a remarkable statement, but perfectly intelligible spiritually. " I turned back to see the voice which spoke with me." He turned back and saw, not a voice, surely, for that is not the

thought—a voice is to be *heard*—but he turned and *saw* a Person, a glorious Person, indeed—in judicial habiliments, it is true, but nevertheless, he saw a *Person*.

In the three passages read, we have the Lord looking round, and in the first passage it is with anger, a very solemn consideration. It is a terrible thing to think of the anger of Jesus. He is very slow to anger ; in this instance it was provoked, but not any more provoked than it is being provoked now in this world. Need being existent everywhere, the Lord is ready to heal, but there are those who stand between Him, or would stand between Him, and the objects of His compassion. That is the condition of what is called the profession of Christianity. Men have established systems and rules, and these are bound up with prejudices and personal ambitions, so that they would shut out the Lord from the objects of His compassion. Here is a man with a withered hand, and the Lord would heal that withered hand. It is not, indeed, to be healed to be used for the building up of this world. No, the Lord will never heal a hand for that. If He heals a hand that is withered, beloved, He will heal it so that it may be employed in His service, and His service is free from the trammels of human religion. He will have it so. But here the Pharisees would stand between Him and this poor suffering man with the withered hand ! Is that not how matters stand, beloved brethren, around us ? and is it not a matter of importance that the man with the withered hand should be healed ? Are we to allow this ? Is this religious hindrance to be dominant, to be permanently so ? Are we to sit still and do nothing ? You remember how in the days of Ezra, the enemies of Judah and Benjamin would seek to co-operate with them, but the leaders of the people, Zerubbabel and Jeshua, said, No, we ourselves will build ; Ezra 4 : 2, 3. They refused loose

principles, but in refusing loose principles, in refusing to allow others to co-operate with us in the service, we may cease to do anything, as it was with them. They refused to co-operate with others, and rightly so, but then the work ceases, *that* is the solemn thing. It would be a question as to which is to be commended, co-operating with others or sitting down doing nothing! It says the people of the land weakened them, so that the work was hindered, and an order from the king comes in keeping with that, and the work ceases. Why should the work cease? Is God not able to support us in it? In the next chapter of Ezra we find that a like thing happens, but it says that the eye of their God was upon them, and the work did not cease, neither did the king order them to cease. If we have the heart for the work and the will to do it, we are not ordered to stop. So in the first instance the work stopped, but in the second instance the work did not stop, it was completed. The work was finished, and that is what God is at now, the finishing of the work. And so, I would ask, 'Are we to be sitting down maintaining exclusive principles, but sitting down doing nothing and letting the people of the land weaken us?' On that line we shall get the king's order so that there is nothing done. The work is stopped, there is no building, and yet their own houses were looked after, as Haggai tells us; Hag. 1 : 4.

The Lord takes the ground here in Mark 3 of dealing effectively with this attitude of the Pharisees; He looked round on them with anger! a most solemn thing for the current profession who interfere with the work of God, neither entering in themselves nor allowing others to enter in. That is the situation. The Lord looked round on them with anger. It was not as yet the time to execute the anger, but that would come, and so to-day He looks round with anger. Presently the anger—the wrath—will be

executed. I am speaking now of what He does, He is looking round. Let no one assume that he escapes that holy eye of Christ. Whatever I am doing to interfere with the work of God is noticed by Him. Whatever I am doing to interfere with the relief of sufferers spiritually is noticed by Him. He resents it, He looks upon it with anger. But He was not stopped, beloved, He says to the man, "Stretch out thy hand," and the man's hand was made whole. He is to be used in the service, for that is the idea. If my withered hand is restored, it is to be used, and so the passage goes on to speak of the Lord calling to Himself His disciples on the mountain and making a selection from them. If I am not to get a special commission, I should like, at any rate, to be amongst those from whom the Lord picks, that in itself is a great thing, because He will not pass me by. He selected twelve, we are told, from certain others, but what about the others? Will they be neglected? No, the Lord will not neglect us, you may be sure of that. With a restored withered hand you will be used in due course. The exercise is good, and that restored withered hand will be employed by the Restorer of it. He needs it, as it says in the same gospel, "The Lord has need of it" (chap. 11 : 3), that is, of the colt.

The next passage which I read, chapter 11, contemplates the temple, a word that has great significance. The Lord having arrived in Jerusalem, entered into the temple and He looked round on all things, not now persons, but *things*. No doubt the things stand related to persons, but there are *things* that the Lord takes account of. It would be my house, as an illustration. I may appear in the assembly and be intelligent, and take my part in it, but someone comes into my house and he sees things that are out of keeping. I do not bring them to the temple, I do not bring them to the assembly, no, they will not

do there—they are *things*. But if I love them in my house, do I give up that love of them in the assembly ? I am certain it is not so, and the Lord so regards it, too. He challenges us as to the things. The things are in the houses, but then it may be that they are in the assembly, or something like them. And so the Lord takes account, beloved, not only of our persons, but of the *things*. It says that He looked round on all things. And so it is in the profession viewed in another way. In chapter 3 it was the Pharisees, but now it is the temple in which the service of God was professedly carried on, but in what way ? in connection with what ? It is a fine thing to be able to put names, beloved brethren, on things. Sometimes things pass muster as fit for the service of God until some spiritual man comes and he puts a name on it. Now take the brazen serpent. It had a place religiously in Israel for hundreds of years. In Numbers 21 it is called the serpent of brass, and it was lifted up on a pole. It had a spiritual meaning then, anyone looking at it lived. As the Lord Himself says, " And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, thus must the Son of man be lifted up," John 3 : 14. That was what it meant in Numbers 21, *in the wilderness*. It is not only the thing, but the place in which it was lifted up. But now, hundreds of years afterwards, a spiritual man comes up, Hezekiah, and he finds it an object of veneration. No mention is made of it by Samuel, David, Solomon and others, as if the great servants had left it unnoticed. That often happens, that things are left unnoticed, things that are wrong, until someone comes and names the thing, and so it is that Hezekiah, amongst other things he did in dealing with evil in the kingdom, calls it Nehushtan, meaning " *brass* " (2 Kings 18 : 4), and breaks it in pieces. It is just a piece of material, he says, and you are worshipping it ! He puts a name on it ; he does not call it a serpent of brass

(that was a spiritual thought—" lifted up ") it had ceased to be that, it was a *piece of brass* which had acquired a place of worship. How much of that is abroad in Christendom, and the Lord looks round on all this, He sees all these things. He sees the celebration of the Mass as a ceremony—He sees that constantly, and other abominations in that system, and in the systems of this country, too. How the drift is towards idolatry! The Lord is looking round at that. That is to say, His eye scans the whole area of Christendom, and He sees what is there, and if you were to ask Him, He would give you a name for everything.

In Revelation He not only *looks* round, but He *walks* round. He " walks in the midst of the seven golden lamps " (Rev. 2 : 1), and then we learn what He says about the churches. They all come under view, and He says to one, " I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love," and to another, " I have against thee that thou permittest the woman Jezebel," to another, " I have not found thy works complete before my God," and so forth. He looks round and names things. A most important thing for us to name things, and not to misname them, not to call evil good, and good evil. One of the greatest needs among the brethren is the ability to discern, having our senses exercised, as it is said, for distinguishing both good and evil, because sometimes the good seems to be evil, and the evil seems to be good, and why is that? Because of bad eyesight!—no ability to distinguish between good and evil.

Well, the Lord looked round on all things in Mark 11; He made no comments yet, but He went out to Bethany with the twelve. *They* were not to stay there, any more than He. It is a good many years ago that the Lord left with the twelve, so to speak—I mean those movements involving the great recovery that we are benefiting from now. In the

very beginning of Christianity He left with the twelve. God was wonderfully patient with Israel, but in due course He left that system with the twelve, He brought the twelve with Him. What did that mean ? It meant that if He was leaving one system, He had means of establishing another. He has the means by Him of establishing another system. In the meantime He goes out to Bethany with the twelve. Doubtless they had a good time that night. One would love to have been there at Bethany that evening with the Lord and the twelve ! It is nice to get among the brethren when they are taken up with the interests of Christ. But remember it must be in the character of the twelve, and not on partisan lines. We may come together and deal with matters and seem to be settling things, but on partisan lines—that is not the twelve. The twelve are no party, they are an administrative company in love that the Lord can use at His pleasure—that is the principle. He went out with the twelve to Bethany. Bethany was the place of holy communion ; there was liberty there. The Lord opens up His heart in that town without any fear of being betrayed. It was the place of affection and confidence, a resort to which He could go at any time. It was the contrast between the state of things in Jerusalem and the communion and liberty of love. Jerusalem was hostile, and so was the temple, but He had rights in it, He could look round there as the Owner of it—it was the temple of God. He had rights in it, and so He has to-day, He has rights. But after looking round on all things, He goes out to Bethany with the twelve. Now what I would press, beloved, is to get into the idea of the twelve, to belong to those whom the Lord can use in His wisdom at His pleasure, so that I am available to Him, not only in an abstract subject way, but in *love*—I do it gracefully, I grace the service by the way in which I do it. *That* is the idea.

Now the third passage read, at the end of chapter 3, contemplates saints here in a world of lawlessness, where people do and say just what they wish to do and say. There is no restraint. To-day nominal ministers of Christ will say almost anything against Him. In this chapter even His relatives say He is out of His mind! Think of that awful thing to say about Jesus—He is out of His mind! You say no one would say that to-day, but do you not think that the religious judgment of some of us who follow Him is that we are out of our minds? I think it is. They think our position is absolutely absurd. "He is out of his mind," and that is said by His relatives! Then there are others in this chapter who came down from Jerusalem and they represent what I have been speaking of, the great established religious system, and they say that He does these wonderful things by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons! What an awful thing to say! But are there not such things being said now? Yes, there are, and by ministers of the truth of the gospel, as they are called. Blasphemous things are being said about Jesus, as if people can say what they wish, what they feel like saying. But in the midst of that the Lord chooses the twelve, He selects them out from the others. I can say: 'You know why You are not selecting me, and I am with You in it.' But He does not leave me out; anyone who speaks like that, He will not leave out, but He is selecting the twelve according to His purpose. It is in His wisdom, and it is surely due to Him to leave Him a free hand in His wisdom to choose whom He pleases, and that is what He does. He sends them out to preach. And then these people come down from Jerusalem and say He is casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons! Terrible word! And the Lord speaks one of the most solemn words that the Scriptures record, that there is no forgiveness to those who speak against the

Holy Spirit—and that is what they were doing, they were attributing to a demon the action of the Spirit!

Well, the Lord has got the twelve. He is there, and the twelve are there, and also persons much more numerous than the twelve who are doing the will of God. For if I am not selected specially, it is my privilege to do the will of God. There were a great number of them here sitting around the Lord; that is what, I trust, we are doing now, and the Lord would, as it were, stretch out His hand and look around on us in a circuit, and He would say, "Behold my mother and my brethren!" Is it not lovely, is it not delightful to think of the Lord looking on us as sitting around Him! Casting to the wind all this opposition, and sitting around Him whom men so slandered and accused. That is what marks this moment, people who overcome all this opposition which is abroad, all this darkness, and find their way to Jesus, to His Name, and sit around Him. It was delightful to Him as He looked around in a circuit on those who were sitting around Him, and He says, "Behold my mother and my brethren." Then He adds to this, as you will notice, "For whosoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." That is to say, He establishes a relationship here that is to go through into eternity! It is not a relationship that is to be abrogated by any circumstances whatever. Those who do the will of God, they are in relationship with Christ, and they abide, as John says, for eternity. As we get in Ephesians, "the good pleasure of his will," "the mystery of his will," and "the counsel of his own will," all these things enter into it. We go through into eternity, and we abide in this blessed position with Christ, we are His brethren.

May the Lord bless the word to us.

THE HEAVENLY SIDE OF THE KINGDOM

ROMANS 14 : 16–18 ; NUMBERS 2 : 1–9 ; MATTHEW 5 : 3 ; ISAIAH 66 : 1, 2 ; 57 : 15

J.T. The two scriptures, Matthew 5 and Isaiah 57, bring in the heavenly side of the kingdom, and that in Isaiah 66 happily links on the earth with the heaven : " The heaven is my throne and the earth the footstool of my feet " ; it is quoted in Acts 7, and it helps us, I think. You have that thought in mind ?

—.M. I was thinking of the practical, exercising and searching line in order in any measure to come into the good of the kingdom, because there are so many things opposed to the kingdom, so many things antagonistic to Christianity.

J.T. Well, I suppose the great thing would be to have the full thought of it. Our practical part in it would come in later, but the scriptures you suggested certainly bring the heavenly side before us, which is a feature of the kingdom in Matthew's gospel, implying that Christ is in heaven, so when He was on earth the Father was there and rules from heaven. The idea, I suppose, in the kingdom of the heavens is to lift the government out of the hands of men when it had been falsified in their hands, to lift it from earth to heaven ; but that being clearly understood, the kingdom of God takes its place here, *God* is here by the Spirit. Obviously the kingdom of the heavens is presented in Matthew, and alluded to in the Acts, to lift the saints of God out of earthly rule, and reach them to heaven. The kingdom of God is the great feature in the epistles, but the allusion to the heaven in the early part of Acts—the " sound out of heaven " (chap. 2), the " light out of heaven " (chap. 9), and the sheet out of heaven (chap. 10) is

clearly heaven's assertion of its rule; the seat of rule—light. And it is a matter of importance that we should understand that, so that we might be free from earthly rule, religious particularly, for Jerusalem has acquired a great place, especially religiously, and it is important that saints should be cleared of that, so that heaven should be the place of rule for them. And thus room is made for the action of the Spirit here unencumbered, unhampered, in the souls of God's people, to develop the rule of God, not simply where He is, but *Himself*, the rule of God, the moral sway of God amongst His people. It is described to be "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit," Rom. 14 : 17. I think the link with Numbers 2 would help us, as seeing in the type, how God is dwelling amongst His people at the present day, as indicated in the whole chapter, dwelling in His own abode amongst us, and the people set each in his place in relation to that abode, so that *God* is there, not a God afar off, but near, indeed *in* us. Does that afford some idea of the kingdom, would you say, Mr. C. ?

C.A.C. Yes, I think so. It is not only the thought of the new metropolis connected with heaven, but the actual control of God down here. Is that your thought ?

J.T. Quite. To illustrate what you say I suppose we might refer to the empire. The centre of rule is in London, but the power is felt, or should be, to the uttermost bounds of the kingdom; the kingdom—whatever it may be—is a question of power, moral sway.

C.A.C. It comes into practical, tangible expression in the subjects of the kingdom.

J.T. Yes, so that Romans, I think, opens it up for us; the sway of God, not only His authority—His authority is there—in "Jesus Christ *our* Lord." I have often thought of that expression in Romans

and Corinthians, giving the Lord a peculiar place in our affections, a place of authority in our affections—*our* Lord! Then "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us." *God* is brought in; there is moral sway, the sphere in which there is not only direct authority from the throne of heaven, but *moral sway*. You get the blessedness of subjection, bringing about the material for the tabernacle. Romans does not go much beyond the individual, but the believers are material as possessed by the love of God, subject to His will, material for the dwelling, and God is really here.

W.B.C. The kingdom of the heavens began when the Lord Jesus Christ took His place in the heaven, and the kingdom of God when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven?

J.T. The kingdom of the heavens existed even before the Lord went up as a Man, because He speaks of it as existing when He was here. The kingdom of God was among them when He was here.

C.C.E. We have the thought of the heavens ruling in Daniel.

J.T. In the types I think the kingdom of God began as Israel came out of Egypt, delivered from the domination of Pharaoh, "and the people feared Jehovah, and believed in Jehovah, and in Moses his bondman," Exod. 14 : 31. They feared God. They "were baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," 1 Cor. 10 : 2. The kingdom of God began in that way, so you have immediately the idea of ordinance, and then, without going into detail, the general opening up of the covenant, involving the law, involving rule in connection with the covenant, which is really in keeping with Romans, the rule of God in relation to the individual in connection with His love. There would be no difficulty in connection with such a rule as that—love.

C.A.C. That would make liberty as existing in the kingdom.

J.T. I thought that, and as Dr. E. suggested in regard to the heavens ruling, the kingdom of God seems to convey that idea in the types throughout the wilderness and in the land until the days of David and Solomon. I think the idea of a rule from heaven is in Jerusalem ; that, passing to the Gentiles, was misused, just as in the days in which Christianity, in which the Holy Spirit, came, rule had been abused, rule committed to men had been abused, and lost its real character as rule committed by God, in a monarch. The idea of a monarch is what is above. Jerusalem stood for what is above.

M.W.B. We are transferred from earth to heaven, and hence the new metropolis.

J.T. The rule of God has lost its true character and become corrupted in the hands of men. And so the book of Daniel is to assert that the heavens rule. The first great Gentile monarch has to learn that—that the heavens rule ; and I think that the link is in Jerusalem, to say nothing about Rome, the rule of Rome which is still recognised in Romans 13. In Jerusalem the idea of rule, religious rule particularly—and that is what saints are largely suffering from, the authority of darkness—had become corrupted, it was darkness, and I think the kingdom of the heavens is an important feature to-day on account of many of our brethren being under religious rule, which is darkening. We need another metropolis, and that metropolis is furnished in the heavens.

M.W.B. It is interesting that the term " kingdom of heaven " is dropped when earth government is put into the hand of the Lord. It seems so, does it not ? We have no mention of it in the millennium.

J.T. There is no need. The expression, I think, is over against the misrule in man's hand ; to set that aside in the souls of God's people, particularly

religious rule, because Christendom is dominated largely, and has been for centuries, by religious rule, that is darkening, and it is a question of the people of God being " delivered from the authority of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love," Col. 1 : 13.

T.P. The introduction of the Son of God coming into this world was to give Israel, and us, the knowledge that He came to deliver.

J.T. Matthew would show at the very outset how rule was misused in Herod's hands. Think of a man slaying a lot of infants ! Where is his idea of rule there ?

T.P. In Luke everything was in order outwardly when the Lord Jesus was born.

J.T. I think Luke refers to the Roman Empire in a kindly way, which is in keeping with his line, but Matthew is ecclesiastical, and his thought is to deliver the people of God from religious rule—misrule, and he sees at once that Herod represented that.

M.W.B. We would recognise what God has said—be subject to rule.

J.T. We are enjoined to respect the powers that be, and, in Timothy, to pray for them.

W.J.H. Rule at the outset, as suggested in the sun and moon, is entirely beneficial. You cannot conceive of the sun and moon ruling to the injury of anyone, can you ?

J.T. So that in the light of that, from the standpoint of Luke, we respect the authority, for authority of any kind is better than no government. The time is coming when " the sun shall be darkened, and the moon not give her light," terrible contemplation ! So that we are thankful to God for any rule now. But all that is nothing to do with the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God goes on.

Ques. In what way do we enter the kingdom of God ?

J.T. Well, I think the first way is seen in John's gospel; he brings in new birth in chapter 3 to show the initial idea of entering. Matthew and Luke make much more of it; John just touches on it to tell us that unless one be born again he cannot see it. Well, that is very sweeping. You might take the cleverest man in the world, the most educated, and yet he could not see that! The most polished statesman cannot see that, cannot even *see* it! John brushes everything else aside but what is of God. And then the Lord says in answer to Nicodemus, "Except any one be born of water and of Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." So that he can neither see nor enter without new birth—that brings the thing down to the work of God.

A.M.H. You connect both of those thoughts with new birth?

J.T. Yes, it is in the chapter, is it not? The idea of "water and the Spirit" is very initial. Water suggests the cleansing element, which is to shut out the natural, and bring in the thought of holiness or purity, new birth. Without new birth, you cannot *see* the kingdom of God, or *enter* it! The latter is the greater, and therefore the Lord adds the idea of water, to shut out the natural first, in regard of man's conception, he cannot see it; and secondly, in connection with man's estate, he is impure. The water suggests the idea of the cleansing element. First as to his mind, and then as to his moral state, man is impure. It is to sweep the board of everything that man is naturally, he has no part in it at all. And then there is the idea of the testimony presented, and that is what John makes so much of, and what the Lord makes so much of, the presentation of the thing in testimony, the preaching of the kingdom.

A.M.H. "Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit," a spiritual sphere.

J.T. And it was intended to be brought in by the

witnesses. When the Lord spoke of it in Matthew, He refers to what He was doing by the Spirit of God : " But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then indeed the kingdom of God is come upon you " (chap. 12) ; that is, it was there *upon them*. And in Luke He says, " the kingdom of God is in the midst of you " (chap. 17) ; that is, in Himself, grace acting in power in Himself for the deliverance of man. So that I think the Lord intends, as He went up into heaven, that the thing should be carried in themselves ; they were to go to the city and preach, and if the people did not receive them, they were to say : " but know this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh " ; not only the light of it, but the thing itself.

C.A.C. That is very important, throwing a great exercise upon all who present the kingdom in testimony—that it should not only be in word, but also in power.

J.T. Paul supports what you are saying, clearly. That is exactly what he said to the Corinthians.

W.J.H. That is confirmed in the rejection of Samuel. God says to Samuel when they desired a king, " they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me," 1 Sam. 8 : 7. In rejecting Samuel, they rejected God. That is a test for us.

J.T. That is very good. If one who represents God is rejected, *God* is rejected.

P.L. " For ye know yourselves, brethren, our entering in which we had to you, that it has not been in vain," 1 Thess. 2 : 1. You get there the thought of our entering in. Paul is bringing in the kingdom in his ministry, is he not ?

J.T. Well, I thought so. As Mr. C. was saying, the kingdom of God is not in word. You may get a good word, you know, from any pulpit, a well-spoken word of doctrine, and yet the man may not be converted. You can hardly think the kingdom is there, it is just word.

C.A.C. So that Paul puts together the two things. He says, "in the word of truth, in the power of God," 2 Cor. 6 : 7. The latter would really be the kingdom.

J.T. I thought that ; the thing was demonstrated in their midst. The sphere of the Holy Spirit at the beginning had that place ; it was really there, heaven was ruling.

C.A.C. It would raise the question as to how the testimony is received and how it works out, rather than how it is presented, would it not ? I thought the kingdom might have been presented in power, say, by Paul, but when you come to the reception of it and the working of it out in those who receive the testimony, there might be such elements as lead to the deterioration of the thing.

J.T. That is very helpful, because it is exemplified at Corinth ; the testimony was not rightly received.

W.J.H. So in Galatians the apostle could say, "before your very eyes, Jesus Christ has been portrayed, crucified among you," chap. 3.

J.T. Both at Corinth and Galatia, in spite of the perfect testimony, the word was so poorly received that a mixed state of things ensued, and now that has become so corrupted that it has become a great tree, a huge thing in this world, in which the birds of the air find a resting place ; so that Paul in writing to the Corinthians sent Timothy, his son, to them so that they might see in him the apostle's own ways : and that is the position, I think, to-day, that the gospel is announced more or less rightly in the doctrine of it but without the exemplification—the power—in the witnesses, in the preachers.

C.C.E. Do you not think that that accounts largely for the poor results of modern missionary work ?

J.T. It is a mixed worldly state of things, you know. It is just the spread of the worldly corrupted

things. Not that there are not really conversions, but it is not exactly portrayed before them, before the ones to whose notice it is brought.

M.W.B. How would you connect the thought of the kingdom of God and the assembly ?

J.T. The kingdom of God is a good work in our souls for the assembly, I think. That is to say, to be simple, Romans is to bring the saints into the kingdom. The question has just been brought up as to how we enter, and we have been speaking of John 3 as presenting God's side and sweeping away all that man is morally, but then there is, apart from new birth, apart from one who qualifies to see and enter, the idea of the thing presented in testimony, and I think that is Romans, so that the way in formally, publicly is : " if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved," chap. 10. I think that one is publicly in the kingdom thus. And Corinthians adds to that ; the apostle says, " no one can say, Lord Jesus, unless in the power of the Holy Spirit," 1 Cor. 12. Thus one calling on the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit is publicly and practically and in power in the kingdom of God. It is a very real thing. He is in an invulnerable position, and he is free thus to have part in the assembly, without fear.

—.T. Would the kingdom of God have a subjective effect in us ?

J.T. Well, I think the thing is presented objectively in the testimony, it exists here, it is here in virtue of the Holy Spirit having come down from heaven. *God* is here, that is a very great fact, you know ; it is a fact, not a theory, and we should be aware that God is here in our gospel meetings. There is a sway, an influence, that effectively keeps us out of the world ; a positive influence, not only that Christ is in heaven, but that *God is here*. Man is

here, and God is here, and the kingdom of God is presented in an objective way for men to come into.

It is a great thing if I am subject ; God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him, that is what Peter says ; Acts 5 : 32. As soon as the Holy Spirit comes into my heart, then you can talk about something subjective. What a mighty thing, given to all those who obey Him ! It is not only the rule, but the influence, the blessedness, " righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." I thought that Exodus shows how the individual comes into all that. There is the idea of God entering into covenant relationship with His people, and in these covenants are certain rights ; they are not against us ; in Deuteronomy 33 the law was the *inheritance* of the people, and the " king in Jeshurun " means that He is enjoyed, He is valued. That is what comes out in Deuteronomy, on the individual side, I think. And then you get the position of each of us as believers in relation to divine dealing in Numbers. There are four camps of three tribes each, and it opens up the local position. Judah's camp is eastward, towards the sun-rising ; in Judah's camp I would be full of hope. And then Reuben (and the two other tribes mentioned) on the south ; how delightful to be in that camp, on the south, in the favour of God ! Ephraim was in the rear at the west, where naturally men would be without hope, because the west is the going down of all our hopes, the sun going down ; but before Ephraim and Manasseh the Lord shone forth ; He shines where hope might wane. And where does He shine from ? From the very midst of the groupings ! He is very near. How one would lie down at night with the sense that *God* is there, what can harm us ! And then Dan at the north ; the bitter wind of persecution or suffering of any kind is there, but *God* is there ; " we also boast in tribulations," Rom. 5 : 3.

W.J.H. Benjamin was also in the group in the rear at the west.

M.W.B. He was in the grouping behind. In Psalm 80 they followed in the wake of the Shepherd of Israel.

Ques. What is the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the Son of His love ?

J.T. The kingdom of the Son of His love would be to bring in the affections of Christ known as the *Son*, God's dear Son. It belongs to Colossians, you know. We are advanced more, we are away from the Red Sea ; we know God better, we come into the light of God's dear Son. It is the kingdom, it is the rule, but it is the rule of such a One as the *Son*, God's dear Son. The passage in Numbers is most touching, and everyone should get into his soul that he is at the east or the south or the west or north, and the centre is the blessed God, whose interest goes all round ! The kingdom of His dear Son ! It is not the rule of Moses now ; it is the rule of God's dear Son. Moses had sons, but they do not come in much. But David had a son—referring to the type—Solomon. I think that " His dear Son " in Colossians is for us *now* ; so that we should be in the land of Canaan, you know, we should not stay in the wilderness.

W.J.H. There should be the recognition of each of these princes ; they are named sovereignly by God. Each tribe has a captain. It really involves subjection to one another to get the gain of God being with us.

C.A.C. You were saying this has reference to our local setting. I should like just a word in that connection.

J.T. Well, as Mr. H. has just remarked, the princes of each tribe would represent rule, only rule in one very familiar to us. He would not be a stranger. I think that local rule, rule in a local company, has not the character of anything foreign or oppressive,

but we are known to each other, and if there are those who are known to be in the character of a prince, that is, spiritual stature, we readily come under his rule. It is simply and easily accepted because we know the person. Not that we should slip in any way under clericalism, but there is such a thing as moral stature, personal influence. And then "the ensign of their father's house." The pedigree sets me in my place family-wise. There is a link of affection in the local company. Whilst there is rule in the prince, he is my near relative, my pedigree shows that I am related, so that the rule becomes very easily accepted. That is, if the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, we readily accept the rule of those who are of greater spiritual stature. So that our local companies do not become democratic. Of course there is the mutual side, but mutuality may be carried too far. There is the idea of rule. The Son of the Father's love! Well, that is rule which is very happily accepted. I think it should be expressed in us locally. We are related to one another, and the rule of God prevails locally. And then, in a wider way, as under Judah or under Reuben or Ephraim or Dan, we stand in relation to the dwelling place of God.

—.L. Would the leaders be the same as we get in Hebrews? We are to obey them.

J.T. Well, that is the same idea. "Obey your leaders," Heb. 13 : 17. You are to know them. I do not see how we are to get on save as we each locally are submissive to those who have moral ability to rule. We are all of the same pedigree, and that equalises things. So that the names were not in order of birth on the breast-plate of the high priest. On the shoulders of the high priest the names were according to birth : the pedigree brings out the birth. You have the idea of subdivision on the shoulders of the Lord, my relation to the tribe ; and the twelve

are divided into two parts. The order of birth involves the pedigree, where my setting is, my father's house, I am supported by the Lord there. But then on the breast-plate it is not according to birth ; the breast-plate is the question of the sovereign counsel of God. It is the question of sovereign arrangement ; He places *Judah* on the south ! Reuben had the birthright, but he lost it on account of his behaviour ; Judah was the prince, because he prevailed among his brethren, that is, there was moral stature there. God will raise up princes in every locality, but the prince has to bear in mind that he is one of the brethren ; even the king is one of the brethren. It would save us from autocracy. In taking up Numbers in this sense we are to understand that each has to take his place according to pedigree, and then come under the further groupings which are according to God's wisdom, that I do not do this and that as I please. I question myself as to the will of God, and what is in the will of God under my grouping. Whether it be Judah, Reuben, Ephraim or Dan, I am under divine influence ; how blessed to be there ! There you have the priests coming and going, we are wonderfully provided for ! That is the position in Numbers. The link between Exodus and Numbers would be the link between Romans and Corinthians.

FAITH, LOVE AND SPIRITUALITY

GALATIANS 5 : 6 ; GENESIS 24 : 1–14 ; 48 : 11–22

THE verse I read in Galatians indicates what I have in my mind, dear brethren—faith working by love. I may allude to one or two others as further indicating what I have before me to enlarge upon, namely that we are to serve one another by love, that is in the same chapter. And then in the next chapter (6) we have allusion to those that are spiritual ; if one be overtaken in some fault " ye which are spiritual restore such a one." And then again in that chapter we have the statement that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision but new creation. " And as many as walk according to this rule peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." These are leading thoughts in the epistle to the Galatians, which epistle is intended to deliver the people of God from the retrograde movement tending towards legality, and from the beggarly elements of the accredited religions of the world. We are brought according to these passages into the realm of faith working by love, and by love serving one another, and into the realm of spirituality and new creation, so that the Israel of God should come to light ; and that is the mind of God for us ; and so I am encouraged to go to Genesis to work out these thoughts. For I perceive that in Jacob they develop in a beautiful blend culminating in the most spiritual act recorded of faith, in Jacob as he was dying, the Spirit of God recording of him in the New Testament that as he was dying he blessed by faith both the sons of Joseph and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. Now in proceeding by the Lord's help to work out these features, namely, faith, love and spirituality, I would remark that it is in Jacob we

get the number twelve. The number is worked out in connection with his posterity, and implies the formation of the people of God in the divine nature. Abraham and Isaac are viewed as on a high plane, I mean in the sense that they are taken up as representative of the saints viewed as in Christ. Wonderful things are intimated in them for us.

Abraham is introduced in the New Testament by Stephen as singled out for the God of glory to appear to, God thus indicating that He had intended to shine out in His purposes and in His love, for that is what is meant in the wonderful expression, the God of glory. And then Isaac following upon Abraham is the heavenly man. We may take account of ourselves, beloved brethren, both as seen in Abraham and as in Isaac. But if we are by divine intention and moral process to reach qualification to enter upon these great heavenly features we have to come down to Jacob. For it is in the history of Jacob we see ourselves as specially in the divine mind, and in the history we see the varied incongruities and inconsistencies and irregularities of the flesh in believers. Others represent the flesh in unbelievers, but God would teach us by setting out in a man of like passions with ourselves what the flesh is in the believers. A very uninviting picture, I grant, but then concurrently with that picture you have patiently developed the workings of love; the thread of gold runs through and supersedes and eclipses completely in the end the flesh. God will take care of us and work His thoughts out. He said to Moses that He would destroy Israel and make of him a great nation—He could do that. That would be a matter of His power, but where would be His patience? The great patience of God is a very great feature with Him, a feature of His testimony, one of the leading features of the apostle too, as Paul says: In all patience. And so God is pleased to take us up knowing well what we are. He

is never disappointed with any one of us, and He intends by the histories He gives that we should not be disappointed with ourselves, with those incongruities, those lawlessnesses, those sins ; we are not to be surprised, we are to be humbled. If we carefully study the history of Jacob, the history of Moses, the history of David, the history of Peter, all of them believers, all of them servants of God, honoured servants, we shall never be surprised at the manifestations of the flesh. Not that they are ever admissible. God never admits the necessity of sin in any one, and never condones it either. Sin in a believer is none the less sin than it is with a sinner in the world—it is sin in whomsoever it appears. And it brings forth death, too, that is the principle of it, we cannot escape the consequences of sin, I mean to say in a disciplinary way, for if we sow to the flesh it is inevitable we reap of the flesh corruption. But then, what these histories mean, and I dwell upon Jacob tonight, what these histories mean for us is that God can work out His thoughts in us in spite of it, that is the idea. And so in the blessing of Jacob, to illustrate what I mean, recorded in Genesis 49, you have the whole history as it were outlined. We have for instance the apostasy of Dan, but yet at the end we find that every tribe was blessed by Jacob, that is to say the blessing comes in spite of these things, for God is God ; and His gifts and callings are without repentance. Then in the blessing of Moses you have not a word about fleshly lusts in the tribes. There it is not a question of God blessing His people in spite of sin, but blessing them because of the presence of the Holy Spirit, for that is the point of view in Deuteronomy. So that two most encouraging thoughts are applicable to us as believers. On the one hand God blesses us, as it is said : Yea, and he shall be blessed : He blesses us in spite of sin in us, and its workings, and on the other He blesses

because of the Holy Spirit in us. That is to say, in the presence of the Spirit, there is the full development of the mind of God, so that the tribes seen in Deuteronomy have none of these marks. They are viewed, I may say, abstractedly, and God is entitled to view His work abstractedly. Indeed, I doubt whether any Christian is really fixed, grounded in his soul until he is able to see himself abstractedly in Christ, until he is able to see how it is said : " Whosoever is born of God sinneth not ; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

Well now you see in Jacob how this work proceeds in spite of one of the crookedest characters in a believer that Scripture affords. For he is a true believer, is Jacob. He has marks of divine work from the very outset, he has divine instincts ; and everyone should challenge himself whether he has got these ; if he has got these God will carry him through. He took his brother by the heel, he supplanted the man after the flesh, He had power with God. And then we find he secures the blessing of God by the aid of his mother, by subterfuge, but nevertheless he secures the blessing ; and his father Isaac said : " Yea, and he shall be blessed." There was no recalling it. In securing that blessing he had the aid of his mother. She was a remarkable mother, one of the most remarkable mothers in Scripture ; and I believe the great defect of most of us is in the mother. Rebekah said to Jacob, " Upon me be thy curse, my son." There is a mother ! It is the spirit of Christ—he took the curse. Rebekah did not, but there was the attitude ; and Jacob began thus his journey in the light of such a mother ; and now we are told that he arrived in Syria where his mother's brethren resided. Much might be said about chapter 28, a well-known chapter in which God for the first time, as far as Scripture records, appears to him.

However much in us precedes the definite divine manifestation, that is never forgotten. Jacob ever reverts to it. Do not ignore this matter of divine manifestation. It takes the form usually in the young of an impression of divine interest and care, but nevertheless a manifestation, and a consequent impression that is never to fade, that is to go with you always ; you ever revert to it. That is chapter 28. Every young believer should study chapter 28. It is not the beginning of spiritual history, it is the confirmation, beloved, of the work of God which may date back years, and no one should be without it. To go steadily on his way he needs it and that is what you find with Jacob. Jacob continued his journey. Many stop, as did the Galatians : " ye ran well, who hath stopped you ? " One might ask that question here tonight : " Who hath stopped you ? " Jacob was not stopped, he was on a journey, moving under orders. He had something definitely in view in the journey and he went on it, he went on his journey.

Now I want to show you, dear brethren, how as having gone on his journey he finds himself in remarkable circumstances, a set of circumstances that challenge the reality of his love, if he had any. The apostle says : " If I have not love I am nothing." A very sweeping word. Without love I am nothing. But with it—what can I say ?—I hope to say much. Now has Jacob got any ? He went on his journey, he arrived at the children of the east. He looked around and he sees a well. He is observant. He is not looking out for the sights of the eastern country. Every country has its own sights and people run to and fro to see the sights : but what sights ? What is Jacob looking for ? He sees a well and three flocks lying by it. And there was a stone on the well's mouth. Now, beloved brethren, who is there that has not been in such circumstances—a well, three

flocks needing to be watered, and yet a stone on the well's mouth? Has Jacob any love? If not, faith is dead. Faith without works is dead, says James. So it is. Faith was not dead in Jacob, love was there; but it is not acting yet. "Whence are ye?" he says. They reply, "Of Haran are we." It is well to enquire who they are. No open principles with Jacob, no loose principles. Faith would enquire who the people are. "Whence are ye?" "Of Haran are we," Jacob says, as it were, 'A relative of mine is there.' I wonder how much we enquire for our relatives, because if we have love in our hearts they are the ones to express it to. Is there anybody here I can love, that is the thing? In God love acts sovereignly, but if I love it must have an object. "Do ye know Laban?" "We do know him . . . and behold there comes Rachel his daughter with the sheep." Now relatives are not only spoken of, but they come to light. Jacob could say, Well, it is high day, why don't you water the flocks? He could tell people what to do, but he was not doing it yet, a very common thing, dear brethren. There are those who know what to do and can tell others to do it, and are not doing it, and so far are dead. It is not faith working by love to tell people to do a thing I can do myself. Nor will the Lord do it for me. If you do not do what you can do you are losing. So it was with Jacob. But presently Rachel comes, the near relation. Oh, I say, dear brethren, what are we doing with our relatives, how are we regarding our relatives? In the history of Jacob we have four mothers in his family. How are we going to get a family where love is to be worked out with four mothers? Well, that is where love is worked out. That is exactly where love is worked out, it is exactly in those circumstances, where there are twelve sons of four mothers. God says, I am going to work out love in spite of those mothers, two of them slaves.

There are mothers in Christendom to-day who are like those slaves—"which is in bondage with her children." Babylon is like that. She is seen in the desert, and she has got daughters, corrupt ones too. There are other systems, they have children also, and alas many of our dear relatives are found under the influence of these mothers. And it is extremely hard to exercise love towards them, they will not let you. It is a question of love which never fails, never! That is the statement—love never fails. And so, dear brethren, the question is, they are our relatives, near relatives, they are Christians, and we must have them. Love must have its object. And so faith works by love, faith has a wonderful weapon in love, it works by it; and then if we serve, we are not to serve otherwise but by love. That is what marks the epistle to the Galatians, faith working by love.

And so Jacob, as soon as he sees Rachel with her father's flock, moves away the stone from the well's mouth. She was his true kin; Rachel was the daughter of his mother's brother. She was a near relative. As every true Christian is to us, every one of them, even in Rome, or in any other system. They are our near relatives, and God will have us to exercise love, faith working by love. Faith is brought in, and love is attracted. We will leave no stone unturned until it has its object. And so Jacob rolls the stone away in love, so that Rachel's flock, or Laban's flock which Rachel cared for, might be watered. That was a great service, beloved. Our near relations all around us are thirsting, and the stone is not rolled away, the whole system is against it. But love rolls the stone away and the water is available, and the flock is watered; and then there is the expression of love in the kiss. And the consummation of all is in the house, the family of Laban, where relationship is established, for Laban recognises Jacob as his bone

and flesh. Is it not so with our brethren, our bone, our flesh? Yea, the bone and flesh of Christ, and they surely are worth serving by love.

Well, now I want just briefly to show the spiritual side, for they run together. In chapter 30 Jacob as soon as Joseph is born starts his journey again. The journey out is towards Rachel, the journey back is towards Isaac. And Jacob begins his journey back as soon as Joseph is born, that is to say, Christ comes in. And then God meets him and changes his name to Israel, and then he returns to Bethel, where God confirms his change of name. He is at Bethel now a spiritual man, and receives another appearing of God; and again he resumes the journey which ended in Hebron, where Isaac was. Now we see, beloved, the full identity of Hebron is given in chapter 35. It is where Abraham and Isaac sojourned, the very Hebron that was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt, the world that was in the purposes of God. Jacob has reached the confines of a new world in resurrection. He is in a new world now in the exercise of his love and his spiritual energy: and then we get the history of Esau, the man after the flesh. But before we get his history we have a spiritual man and the confines of another world and so God can afford to portray before our eyes the history of Esau. No golden thread in that history. Esau hated Jacob, he had no brotherly spirit, he was devoid of brotherly love. And then we have the history of Joseph. In chapter 37: "These are the generations of Jacob—Joseph," and you get no more. Only the history of Joseph proceeds culminating in his being lord of all Egypt; but is he to eclipse his father? No! No man eclipses his father, that is not the divine thought. What comes to light is this, that the beautiful blend of love and spirituality culminates in superiority, and so Jacob blesses even Pharaoh, for without contradiction the less is blessed

of the better. He is greater than Pharaoh. You see, dear brethren, what I am at for the moment is moral greatness. We are not living in the days of officialdom, that is past. But moral greatness remains, and the saints recognise it, God will see to that. So that the spiritual man is morally great. Here is a man with the appearance of a shepherd and he blesses the great monarchs of the world. That is moral greatness and it is indisputable. Pharaoh dare not resent it. Jacob blesses Pharaoh. But what about Joseph; is Joseph greater than Pharaoh? He was morally, not officially obviously, but morally. Is he greater than Jacob? Oh no, he is not greater than Jacob. And that although there is not a single charge of sin made against him, not a blemish. He represents in Genesis the incorruptible. That is what Joseph is. But he is in the presence of a greater. How? Well, Jacob is blessing Joseph. The less is blessed of the greater again, but more than that, it is the first time that we have a failure in Joseph. And I suppose it is very largely to bring out what I am saying, that this wonderful workmanship of God in Jacob is to shine in all its lustre in the presence of Joseph. It is to eclipse Joseph. You will notice the recurrence of the word 'Israel.' It is the Israel of God we were speaking of in Galatians. Jacob had reached the confines of the world of resurrection. Galatians touches on new creation. That is what we are touching here. He is passing out of this world in splendour, the splendour of moral greatness, a wonderful combination of love and spirituality worked out in contrariety and failure. And so Israel blesses Joseph, and he blesses the sons of Joseph, and he says to Joseph: I want these two children here, they are mine. I say to Jacob, 'What good are they to you? You are dying.' But he is not going to die, he is in the light of the resurrection. That is the position here, he is the Israel of God, and he knows it. He is

dying in power, that is what he is doing. So he says, I want these too, and the Lord wants us on these lines, on spiritual lines, not on natural lines. He says, I don't want them on natural lines ; what is nature to me ? I am dying, I want the spiritual. And so he crossed his hands wittingly. Joseph brought them out from between his knees. This great servant of God is wrong, he is natural when he should be spiritual, he brought them out from between his knees, carefully putting Manasseh on the right hand and Ephraim on the left hand as if he were to determine what this great Jacob, this great spiritual man, should do. Is nature to govern ? No ! No ! Jacob represents God and he says to Joseph : I know it, my son. He is spiritually intelligent. And Joseph is brushed aside, the natural is brushed aside. You cannot introduce the natural into the realm of the spiritual, God will not allow it. Think of Joseph saying : Not so, my father. It is virtually saying : 'Not so' to God. But Jacob would not allow it, and so he set Ephraim before Manasseh. It is an act of power, an act of moral greatness too, beloved brethren ; he set Ephraim before Manasseh. Israel did it. It is a question of spiritual power and discernment.

Well, that is all I have to say, but I think you can see how it applies. If we are to be in the assembly according to God we must follow out these features and see how God works out in spite of the flesh, a state of love and spirituality among His people so that His mind prevails ; and it never will prevail while the flesh has place, as long as nature moves us in relation to the things of God. God prevails, we must make up our minds to it, He will turn the world upside down, God will have His way. So here Israel put Ephraim before Manasseh, and Ephraim was never displaced, for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.

CONDITIONS WHICH ENHANCE THE GOSPEL SERVICE

EPHESIANS 6 : 15 ; LUKE 24 : 33–53

J.T. I have been noticing lately how the gospel of Luke would furnish conditions to enhance the service of the gospel, and it occurred to me that it would be profitable to consider a little those conditions so that the gospel might go out from us more effectively, and I thought this section would serve to indicate the place this feature has in Luke. The word in Ephesians clearly puts it upon us to have our feet shod with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace, and the Lord in this gospel speaks about His feet. Indeed, we have in this very chapter the evidence of how far He would travel to get souls. But what occurred in the gathering as He came in plainly indicates that He had in mind that the gospel should be unhindered, that nothing should stand in its way, and that conditions among the saints should be suitable to it. In this gospel the Lord is seen at the outset as very attractive in preaching—His manner of reading and speaking, and His mouth ; not only the words that He uttered but the manner in which He uttered them, all tending to enhance the message, He being anointed.

F.I. Do you mean that going over in our souls the truth of what is set forth in Luke would enable us to have our feet shod as in Ephesians ?

J.T. Yes ; Ephesians puts it upon us formally to have our feet shod " with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace " ; it is the *preparation.* Every believer cannot preach, because preaching is a question of gift or of being sent, but the feet of all of us should be shod " with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace." Chapter 7 of this gospel shows

how the woman in Simon's house valued the Lord's feet; she washed them and anointed them.

F.I. Is the idea of having the feet shod with this preparation that in our movements, as you are saying—not exactly in the preaching, but in our movements—impressions are left of grace?

J.T. Yes; the feet shod, so that even the footsteps would denote preparation. In Canticles one enquires about the Lord. "Tell me, thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest thy flock, where thou makest it to rest at noon; for why should I be as one veiled beside the flocks of thy companions? If thou know not, thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock," chap. 1 : 7, 8. The "footsteps of the flock" have their own distinction. So that the footsteps of the brethren in any locality are to be traced; they have their own distinction so that others are guided by them. It is not, therefore, that one invites persons to hear the gospel or even to preach it, but the footsteps, the preparation of the glad tidings of peace being on the feet. That is what I was thinking.

F.I. Yes, I see your thought, and that being so, it is very essential that we should be guided in relation to what is set forth in the movements of grace according to Luke's gospel.

J.T. That is right. We are told "The grace of God . . . carries with it salvation," Tit. 2 : 11. It is the idea of the thing being carried, grace in the vessels, not only in the persons who speak. That would be like Luke 4, the manner of the Lord's speaking made the message attractive; they "wondered at the words of grace which were coming out of his mouth" (*v.* 22). But then the woman in chapter 7 washed His feet and anointed them, as if they carried grace to her; she regarded them in that light.

Ques. So the Lord showing His hands and His

feet would suggest our following Him in that pathway?

J.T. I think that would help to indicate what the thought is in this passage. "He shewed them his hands and his feet," and He had already traversed a good journey after two of them. The eleven and those that were gathered together were speaking about His resurrection; they were saying, "The Lord is indeed risen and has appeared to Simon," which would mean that grace was inaugurated. It began by Him appearing to Simon, the one who had denied Him. Grace was the theme, at least, one of the features of the theme amongst them, that He had appeared unto Simon. Simon was the leading apostle and there would be no idea in that company that they were pharisaical, that any should stand off and say, I am better than thou. If any needy soul came in he would be made to feel that the leading man amongst them was a subject of grace. They were speaking about the Lord having appeared unto Simon and it would be well known that he had denied Him, and yet the Lord had appeared to him. That would be grace; and then the other two that had come back from Emmaus could speak about His journeying with them, and how even when they were moving in the wrong direction He made their hearts burn; He went with them in the wrong direction in order to get them to come back. So that what the Lord is in grace would permeate the whole scene in that gathering, whether it be in one who has openly denied Him, or whether in a Christian who has turned his back on Him in going to his own home or in going into the country. Our local companies should be marked, it seems, with the spirit of grace.

Ques. Mark tells us that when Jesus was risen from the dead, "He appeared first to Mary of Magdala, out of whom he had cast seven demons," Mark 16 : 9. Is that the same thought?

J.T. Quite.

Ques. The woman of Luke 7, do you think ?

J.T. Very likely, only Luke makes it stronger in that the disciples themselves are speaking about these matters. The Holy Spirit records it in Mark, but here they are talking about it themselves. So that if anyone comes into our companies and hears us speaking about grace, and that the most distinguished one in the company had denied the Lord yet the Lord was gracious to him, he would say, There is every reason, then, why He should be gracious to me. The heart is set free and there is confidence.

Ques. Do you think they were marvelling about the fact that the Lord had appeared to Simon ?

J.T. Yes. Of course, there would be much more said than that.

H.E.F. They had been witnesses of his breakdown.

J.T. That would be well known. If He had appeared to John it would not have been so noticeable, but that He should appear to one who was so sinful as to deny Him with oaths and curses !

H.E.F. And your thought is that all these impressions should be in the local company, and that should accord with the same spirit that we see in Christ ?

J.T. That is what I was thinking. Therefore, it is not simply that we invite preachers, but the point is to have our feet shod " with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace."

F.C.D. Would what you are saying be exemplified in the company at Thessalonica ? " For the word of the Lord sounded out from you," 1 Thess. 1 : 8. Would that be supported in what you are saying as to the feet shod " with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace " ?

J.T. That is very good. " *From you.*"

F.C.D. You are suggesting, are you not, that if the gospel is to be effective it depends largely on the state of the saints in the locality ?

J.T. Yes ; it is not merely the preaching, but in the " footsteps of the flock " you find the evidence of grace.

F.H. I do not think we shall get many outsiders to come to our meetings unless there is the adorning of " the doctrine of God our Saviour " in our lives ; Tit. 2 : 10.

J.T. And that may be found, as it says, in slaves. Then there is the conversation amongst us as we see here ; they were saying, " The Lord is indeed risen and has appeared to Simon," then the two relate what had happened *on the way*, that is, as they were going to Emmaus. Well, if they were to say anything about themselves it would be that they were in unbelief on the way ; they would have to say, Our backs were turned on Jerusalem, and in grace the Lord joined us and brought us back.

Rem. They would be speaking of the wonderful grace that drew near to them.

J.T. Yes ; it would be very interesting to hear just what they would say. The Holy Spirit relates it for us—what happened on the way. What an impression it would have on them that someone joined them suddenly as they were conversing about things in unbelief. They were downcast. Well, downcast people are no testimony to the gospel ; they might say many things about grace, but anyone would say, What about you ? it has not had much effect upon you. But if anyone met these two on the return journey, hastening back to Jerusalem after they had seen the Lord, then they would have something to say that would encourage. There would be joy in their countenances ; they had seen the Lord ; He had appeared to them in the breaking of bread, and people would have to say, Well, there is something in this.

D.J. Do you think Luke continues Malachi ? In getting together there are those who are said to have

spoken often one to another. And that is recorded many times in Luke's gospel, is it not ?

J.T. That is the idea ; they are gathered here. It has the assembly in view, really, the eleven being there and those that were gathered together. You can understand that the eleven would have a distinctive place. They are called " the eleven " here, and yet of one of them it is said that the Lord appeared to him. What would Peter be saying ? What would he be thinking about, sitting there, the brethren all saying that He had appeared to Simon ? He could not but know that at the bottom of their hearts they were thinking that he had denied the Lord in spite of his apostleship. So the whole scene would be pervaded by the sense of grace, and any person coming into that meeting under the conviction of sin would say, This is the place for me, there is no pharisaical feeling here ; they are all sinners like myself, and they have all been subjects of grace, so why not I ?

A.H. So grace becoming effective in me puts me into the Christian circle, and puts the brethren together so that they might go out in testimony ?

J.T. Yes ; they were gathered together and their conversation was about this great fact that " the Lord is indeed risen and has appeared to Simon."

H.E.F. Do you think they had learned of that appearing from Simon's own lips ? It would give them a remarkable sense of His grace.

J.T. I think Peter would convey a sense of grace when he told it. What exercise of soul he had gone through ! The Lord had turned round and looked on him when the cock crew, and Peter went out and wept bitterly. It was in that state of soul that the Lord appeared to him as He rose from the dead, so that he would convey something of the grace of the Lord in telling it to others.

A.H. And is it that which gives him such boldness

to go out and say to others that they had denied Him ?

J.T. Very likely, but it is in the sense of grace. The preacher ought to be in the sense of grace above all others. Peter was when he preached at Jerusalem at Pentecost, but all this preceded that. The point here is the state that marked the company.

F.H. Are you putting forward this thought of our appreciation of grace as the first great preparation of the feet ?

J.T. Yes, the sense of the grace of God which carries salvation for all men. Recently some of us have been noticing other features, such as the idea of the neighbour in chapter 10. That is another thing that enters into the " preparation of the glad tidings of peace." Who is my neighbour ? the man said to the Lord, but the Lord, instead of opening out who the neighbour was, pointed out one who acted like a neighbour. It is how I am to act as a neighbour. The Samaritan was a neighbour. That is another thing, that one has no religious pretension in the service of the gospel. It is one who is a Samaritan, that is, one who has no reputation at all in the eyes of religionists. He is the one that expresses the neighbour. All that enters into the local position, that is, how I am to be a neighbour to others, and for that I must have oil and wine and go to where the people are, where the need is. It is not enough to invite people to the preaching, but you go to where they are. That is how the neighbour is manifested. Then in chapter 14 another feature is in evidence. The Lord shows how we are to use our houses if we are to enhance the gospel, and how we are to conduct ourselves in our houses. I think in most gatherings it is assumed that one or perhaps two do all the entertaining and it is left to them, but then that is not the thought. If one has a house one has to think of the gospel and use it in that connection.

F.H. You are suggesting that this preparation

should be found in the company generally and not in one or two individuals ?

J.T. That is it ; it is to be seen in the feet—in the footsteps. One is to show oneself a neighbour in possessing the means of help and in going to where the need is, and in chapter 14 one is to use one's house in that connection, in the kind of way he invites the brethren.

F.I. There is no discrimination.

J.T. That is what the Lord says. We are not to invite our relatives or our rich neighbours with a view to recompense, but persons who cannot invite again and we shall have recompense in the resurrection of the just.

H.E.F. So the preaching would be very greatly supported by the spirit of grace marking those who compose the meeting.

J.T. That is the thought. The assembly does not preach nor teach, but it is evangelical.

F.C.D. You mean that the assembly is in that way the depository of the glad tidings ? The thing is there in the assembly, and the way it is put in the opening of the Acts is that the preaching was made known publicly and exhibited livingly in the company at Jerusalem.

J.T. That is how it stands. The Holy Spirit came in and sat upon each of the hundred and twenty, and they began to speak " as the Spirit gave to them to speak forth," and they spoke about the " great things of God." Well, that is an extension of what we have here—the " great things of God." Then Peter stands up to preach and the preaching is most effective, but it is doubtful whether it would have been without the background of sympathy in the assembly.

F.I. Would it be right to say that the assembly becomes the depository of the truth in a practical

way as the result of formation in those who compose it ?

J.T. That is right, so there is the idea of the candlestick from which the light shines. It is not preaching or teaching, but formation—the graces of the Spirit.

Rem. One hears of very little effective preaching amongst us to-day.

J.T. We have to bear in mind, of course, that we are living in a day of small things, but I think the local conditions do not lend themselves much to the gospel.

Rem. So you make a point of what we speak and how we speak when we are gathered.

J.T. Exactly ; that is what is noted here.

Rem. Our conversation should savour of this spirit of grace.

J.T. Exactly ; instead of social or natural feelings, it should be apparent that we are speaking of things that indicate the gospel, so that people are not deterred but encouraged amongst us.

Rem. So the contribution of those who went to Emmaus was very good.

J.T. Yes ; " they related what had happened on the way." If you were there with conviction of sin and were to ask them what happened on the way, they could tell you something that would encourage you.

A.H. What do you think is conveyed in the thought that the Lord would have gone further (*v.* 28) ?

J.T. Just this same thing—the evangelical feet. He would go any length to get souls. He was not tired, so to speak. " He made as though he would go farther." If they were going farther He certainly would go. It is a question of endurance in the service.

Ques. What is suggested in the thought of abiding

" in the city till ye be clothed with power from on high " ? Is there something that would answer to that to-day ?

J.T. There is, but I think before we come to that, we might see what they had there. It says, " But while they yet did not believe for joy, and were wondering, he said to them, Have ye anything here to eat ? And they gave him part of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb." That would mean that the local company has something in a spiritual way, something that even the Lord can participate in—the Saviour. There is a spot in the locality where the Saviour, although He can save my soul, can have part. That is another fine thing. There is very little idea abroad of a place here where the Lord can have part. People generally think of the Lord as in heaven, which is right, but there is a place here on earth where He can have part with His people. How it brings the Saviour near to souls !

F.C.D. What do those two things suggest, " part of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb " ?

J.T. I suppose the fish would refer to the sovereign provision of God. The fish is the first of the living creatures mentioned in Genesis 1. No one knows the number of fishes ; the Lord alone knows. He knew where one fish was ; He told Peter to take a hook and cast it in, and he caught one fish, and that one fish had a piece of money in its mouth. That would show how thoroughly He knew the fish and where they were. Then He also told Peter to let the net down into the deep, and then again to cast the net on the right side of the ship, as if He were thoroughly conversant as to the fish. So in this company they understood the divine wealth and sovereign provision, and having fish they broiled it. A gospel going out from this company would not mitigate sin and the awful consequences of sin and the judgment of God upon sinners. Broiling means

the direct action of the fire. There are those nowadays who modify sin and the judgment of God, and talk about no eternal punishment and such things. They have no true idea of the judgment of God on sin. But the Lord Jesus was forsaken of God because of sin. That, I think, is what is meant by the broiling. What do you say?

F.C.D. I fully go with that. Seeing those two things are specially referred to, it is necessary to have them in the company in order that the glad tidings might be effective in its announcement. That is, you have a sense of the sovereignty of God; you do not know exactly where He is going to move, but you are so under His hand that you move as directed of Him.

J.T. That is it, and then having a sense of His judgment on sin. The Lord Jesus was there; His hands and His feet denoted that He had been into death. Why, then, should anyone modify the judgment of God; it was poured out unmitigatingly on Him, and why should the judgment of God be in any way lessened? So the effect is that people say, These people judge sin; the judgment of God is maintained there; they do not make light of sin. Nor will any convicted sinner want sin to be made light of; he is judging it himself, and so the judgment of God borne by Jesus is glad tidings to him, that the Lord Jesus was "made sin for us, who knew no sin."

Then the honey is a product without death; it is food without the necessity for death, so that it is something beyond death, something that we enjoy together in entire immunity from judgment. It is a great thing to get into a place where we have passed out of death into life, where there is no more judgment. That is the food that we eat. The Messiah was to eat butter and honey, both of which are food without death, but it would mean there is a realm beyond death where we can eat.

Ques. Would the presence of those two things indicate an intelligent apprehension of the hands and the feet ?

J.T. I think so. I think the judgment of God on sin in the vicarious suffering of Christ is accepted as food, but then there is a food beyond that. Our eternal portion will not be to feed on death, or what has gone through death, but on what has never entered into death. I mean, there is a realm where the judgment of God relieves us from that and we may enter into it and enjoy life—enjoy that which never had to enter into death.

A.H. Are you suggesting that the appropriation of those two things is of real help to us as our feet are shod with the " preparation of the glad tidings of peace " ?

J.T. Yes ; the broiled fish is food denoting death, but the honey is a product of mutual relations. Bees work together.

F.I. Are they not presented here as what was for the Lord Himself ? He took it and ate it.

J.T. Yes ; I think the broiled fish would mean Himself, what had entered into death, but the honey would be their own product ; it is the work of the Spirit amongst us.

F.I. That which would enable the soul to enter into an appreciation of Christ ?

J.T. Yes, you have an appreciation of Christ as having gone into death. The broiling would mean that the judgment against sin was known in its full bearing in that company.

F.I. I was wondering, in that way, whether our lack of success in regard of the presentation of glad tidings is because we have not been able to bring to divine Persons their portion first. Is it not a question of ascending and descending ?

J.T. Just so ; for the Lord has part in it. It is our acceptance of the full bearing of judgment against

sin. He accepts that too. It is a question of our apprehension of the thing, and the honey is more our product. The fish came from the sea; we have never produced that; that is not a mutual production; it is a sovereign production, but the honey is mutual; what is worked out amongst the brethren by the Spirit, and the Lord loves that.

A.H. Are you thinking that the fact of their giving Him part shows that the saints had appropriated it already?

J.T. Yes; the Lord shares what they have. There is a company in the locality with which the Lord shares what they have.

Rem. It says that He ate it before them.

J.T. That would be to encourage their hearts; they were perturbed.

D.J. Speaking of the broiling, would Psalm 22 give one an indication of the inward feelings of the Lord Jesus? Verse 15 finishes with, "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." He takes it from God.

J.T. It is God's direct action. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There is the indirect action of the fire which would be boiling, but this is broiling, an important matter as to the gospel, that there is a thorough acceptance of the judgment of God on sin, but nevertheless the leading man himself was the most recent sinner and the Lord appeared to him, so that there is grace in abundance.

H.E.F. Do you mean that the company having the broiled fish would involve that they were in keeping with what had taken place in Christ?

J.T. Yes; it is appropriated by the company. There is no mitigation of the divine judgment on sin. The convicted sinner does not wish it. He is convicted and he is judging sin, and the testimony brought to his conscience is that God has dealt with it effectively

in the death of Jesus, so that there is forgiveness. And therefore, the Lord goes on to say here, " These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all that is written concerning me in the law of Moses and prophets and psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their understanding to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from among the dead the third day ; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations beginning at Jerusalem." That is the gospel. It behoved the Christ to suffer, which is in keeping with the broiled fish.

Ques. Would it be right to say that if we understood better and were to ponder the Lord Jesus as the One who knew no sin yet was made sin, it would make way for the Holy Spirit to bring about these conditions of mutuality you are speaking of ?

J.T. Just so. Mutual feeling without the sense of the broiled fish is apt to be leavened and nauseous. The direct action of the fire saves us from corruption and the mutual feeling is pure. We love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption.

D.J. It is very encouraging in connection with what you are saying to see how the apostle Paul calls himself the chief of sinners. He had an impression of mercy, and then he got impressions too from Peter. I think you have called attention elsewhere to the fact that He first appeared to Cephas, and Cephas must have told the apostle. Both men, as you say, were great sinners, one calling himself the chief of sinners.

J.T. Yes ; it is very remarkable that those two men, Peter and Paul, should have had such an experience in sin, the one calling himself the chief of sinners, and I suppose if anyone had challenged Peter in that company, he would have said that he

was the most undeserving of the grace shown to him.

F.C.D. He had evidently "tasted that the Lord is gracious."

J.T. Yes; he spoke of it himself afterwards.

H.E.F. Referring to the remark that the Lord partook of the broiled fish and the honeycomb, do you think it carries the thought that in going out in the gospel we should have before us, not only the relief of men, but that there should be something for Christ?

J.T. I think if you went out from this company that is what you would have in your mind, that if you got souls they would be for Christ.

H.E.F. So that though there was not much outwardly, yet there would be something that Christ could partake of.

A.H. Would you say a word as to Moses and the prophets and the psalms in relation to the glad tidings of peace?

J.T. "All that is written concerning me in the law of Moses and prophets and psalms must be fulfilled" (*v.* 44). That would show that the Old Testament as a whole had borne witness to Christ and incidentally warrants our use of the Old Testament in our gospel ministry, because Moses and the prophets and the psalms spoke of Him in that relation.

S.P. Could you help us as to the distinction between the way in which the Lord speaks here and to the two on the way to Emmaus? It says that He spoke to them "from Moses and from all the prophets," but here He includes the psalms. Have you any thought why the psalms are left out in the earlier case?

J.T. I do not think it is necessary to bring in the psalms when we are seeking to restore a person. The journey to Emmaus was restorative, but when you come to the testimony of the Scriptures as to

Christ, then you bring in all, and the psalms would be experiences which would be proper in the assembly. If you take Peter himself, the leading man there, he had his psalm by that time. He would be able to understand David's remarks in Psalm 51, how they would apply to him.

S.P. I was wondering whether the psalms do not suggest inward feelings.

J.T. They do; they are the experiences of the people of God, and that company was composed of people who had similar experiences. The two on the way to Emmaus had their backs on Jerusalem, and what is said is, "Having begun from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." It was a question of getting them interested in Himself, whether He could gain an entrance into their hearts. Their hearts were burning, but not yet opened like Lydia's heart. It is one thing to have a burning heart and another thing to have an opened heart. Lydia's heart was opened of the Lord to attend to the things spoken. If I attend to the things spoken I will do something, for Lydia opened her house. But they never changed their course; they went on though their hearts burned. So when He entered into the house and broke the bread, He was made known to them; their hearts were touched and they moved back again.

F.H. Was He presenting to them in this case the eating together, the grace of His death to meet all their need, but in the other case His death to enter into His glory, to convince them who He really was?

J.T. Yes; when "he opened their understanding to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, Thus it is written," they would look on things very differently from those on the journey to Emmaus. With your understanding opened there is food for your understanding in what He says.

D.J. Is "beginning at Jerusalem" in keeping with the grace that met Peter?

J.T. Exactly; that is the thought in it. "Beginning at Jerusalem" would mean that the greatest sin had been perpetrated there, sin against God and against Christ, and yet the gospel begins there. That is another thing for us, the magnitude of grace, and then that they are to stay there until they are "clothed with power from on high," which I think is in keeping with Luke. He does not say that you must go to Galilee to get your message or to meet the Lord. The Spirit comes down; the promise of the Father comes down; I do not have to do anything, I just sit and wait for that. That is to say, it is a question now of preaching, but with all this preparation the preaching is not to begin until the Holy Spirit comes in from on high. The preaching is by the power of the Spirit sent from heaven; it is the Holy Spirit come down. So that in preaching one ought to consider Matthew. Matthew says that the Lord will meet us in Galilee. I have to go there, and that means a good journey; that is to say, it means energy. If I am to get my message I have to go for it. That is what transpires before the preaching, but then as soon as you begin to preach you are not taking a journey; it is the Holy Spirit coming in; you expect Him to do that. It is the power coming in of itself. That is what we experience in our gospel testimony.

Ques. Would it be right to say that where the heart is opened the house will become available to all that stands in relation to the glad tidings? I was also thinking of the Lord's remarks in Luke 10 where He sends out the seventy, two by two, and they are instructed to enter into a house, and if a son of peace be there they are to remain.

J.T. Quite; a son of peace would open his house to them.

D.J. Can you give us a word on repentance? It seems that that is the first thing. Peter's first message was, Repent.

J.T. That is another thing. Repentance is preached as well as forgiveness. It is the fulness of the thing here, I think, the preparation being made. "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations beginning at Jerusalem." It means that God is now opening the door of repentance; what marks this wonderful dispensation is that men can repent. There is "joy in heaven," it says, "for one repenting sinner," but the time will come when there will be no place for repentance as in Esau's case. It is the magnitude of the day of grace, that the greatest sinner can repent.

D.J. It is the first thing the apostle mentions to the Ephesian elders, "repentance towards God," Acts 20 : 21.

F.C.D. Is repentance the effect of the work of grace in the soul? You were quoting Acts, and those who listened to Peter say there, "Then indeed God has to the nations also granted repentance to life," chap. 11 : 18. It would appear to be the result of the work of God in the soul, and then forgiveness comes in consequent upon that.

J.T. Yes; repentance would be of no value unless I have forgiveness. Forgiveness is preached so that the repenting soul is forgiven.

F.C.D. Repentance really is on God's side in that sense, and forgiveness comes in in connection with the one who receives it.

J.T. The repenting sinner is forgiven. It is God's attitude that men might repent, but without forgiveness repentance would be valueless.

D.J. Job said, "I abhor myself," and then he repented in dust and ashes. Repentance is not merely being sorry for what I have done.

J.T. I am coming to see that the thing is wrong,

that I have been on a wrong course and my mind is changed about things ; I am beginning to see that I have been wrong, but then, is God going to forgive me ? If He is, it encourages me to judge myself, so that repentance is also preached.

Rem. In Mark 1 the Lord Jesus preached repentance : " Repent and believe the glad tidings."

J.T. Yes ; that is the first thing ; He says, " The kingdom of God has drawn nigh ; repent and believe *in* the glad tidings " (*v.* 15). That is the way it should read ; that is, the whole thing.

F.H. Is it that a continued sense of the necessity of repentance in our souls and a continued appreciation of grace and forgiveness are also parts of the preparation ?

J.T. Yes, a continued sense—a *repenting* sinner. So that if a person comes in as in 1 Corinthians 14 there is an atmosphere that helps him. There is the idea of repentance and of forgiveness and the sense of grace—the whole environment helps him.

F.H. So that the needy soul feels he is in an atmosphere that is helpful.

J.T. Yes ; the preacher has great support and the sinner too.

F.H. One feels much greater liberty in preaching in some gatherings than in others.

J.T. I find it is always easier to preach when the saints are present than when they are not.

F.H. And when you are assured of the sympathies of the saints and love for the blessing of souls.

J.T. And then this enduing with power from on high would be the sense that the power comes into your soul in standing up to preach, because the being endued with power from on high would lead to the preaching, but for that we have to go to Matthew first and take the journey into Galilee which means reproach ; it means a long journey too. But Luke does not ask you to do that ; he tells you to stay in

Jerusalem and the power will come in. It is the magnitude of the position, and that all is of God. Then another thing that comes out here is that He led them out as far as Bethany, that is to say, at the present time we are to understand the patience of God. Why does God continue this wonderful service with man's wickedness mounting up, and his rebellion, apostasy and blasphemy all around? God still continues to have the gospel preached. That is another feature here; "He led them out as far as Bethany," that is to say, He led them to a point which denoted that the gospel should be preached to the Jews first. Bethany alludes to the remnant. It is not Christ received by a cloud out of their sight here, but He is being carried up into heaven as blessing—another view—and it is from Bethany. That is, God is continuing to bear testimony to the Jews in spite of all this terrible opposition they have shown to Jesus. That is a feature that enters into the testimony of the gospel now, that we make it clear that God is very, very patient, but the time is ebbing out and His long-suffering will come to an end.

S.P. Will you say a word as to witness? "*Ye* are witnesses of these things." Does it suggest a link with them in our spirits? I take it that this refers primarily to the apostles, but I wondered whether there was a link with the sufferings of Christ in the testimony of the gospel.

J.T. Witnessing has a double meaning. The meaning here is that you are cognisant by observation of the things of which you are speaking. You might be a witness of them but not bear testimony. In Acts 1 they were to bear testimony, but here it is that the persons who are to bear testimony are really qualified. That is another feature of the preaching; we are to "speak that which we know," John 3 : 11.

S.P. It is not merely a question of an historical knowledge of things, but a sympathetic feeling with

the preacher in connection with the sufferings of Christ.

J.T. That is the thought; you know what you are preaching about. It is not simply a matter of doctrine, but you are conversant with it.

A.H. As in John, "These things said Esaias because he saw his glory and spoke of him," John 12 : 41 ?

J.T. That is how we should speak, because we have seen the thing.

H.E.F. So this kind of spirit was to continue throughout the whole of the present period ?

J.T. That is what I was thinking in suggesting this passage. It is a marvellous presentation of the dispensation.

F.I. And the product of the dispensation is men secured here praising and blessing God ?

J.T. That is so, and they are in the temple, which is in keeping with Bethany. They are recognising the patience of God and they are praising and blessing God in that relation.

F.I. The presentation in the temple to the Jew would be the crowning feature, so to speak, of grace.

J.T. So instead of going to the upper room as in the Acts they go to the temple. It is the patience of God.

A.H. And all this learned practically would help us to touch souls without exciting prejudice or resentment. We often lose souls through that.

J.T. It would indeed. The apostles going into the temple would not arouse any opposition there, and would convey the idea that God was still waiting in patience on the Jews.

F.C.D. It is the same thought in Peter and John going up to the temple to pray; Peter says to the impotent man, "Silver and gold I have not; but

what I have, this give I to thee." That is, they possessed the thing themselves. Is that the idea of a witness ?

J.T. Quite.

D.J. And does not the gospel close with material being secured for the house of God ? There is that not simply meeting the sinner's need, but that really gratifies the heart of God.

J.T. It is well to keep clearly in view that this chapter is a gospel picture, and then the adding of Bethany and Jerusalem is to impress upon us the idea of divine patience, that God is bearing with Jerusalem in spite of the crucifixion of Christ, and He is still bearing with Christendom in spite of its apostasy, as in the days of Ahab God helped him against the Syrians though he was the wickedest man in Israel.

Ques. You would say that God would have us to be in sympathy with His own thoughts in regard of all men in the gospel ?

J.T. And especially His patience. The more you think of it, the more wonderful it is, that God should continue to have the gospel preached in Christendom, because that is where there is the greatest wickedness.

D.J. We know that the long-suffering of God is salvation.

J.T. We know that, and we should keep it in view in the preaching.

H.E.F. Going back to what you are suggesting as the subject of our consideration, do you think it would be just to say that if those composing a local company had their feet shod with the preparation of the glad tidings of peace, and the gospel were preached there, the local company would give a suggestion of the character of peace the one receiving it would come into ?

J.T. That is another important subject, and it raises the whole question of peace. I was thinking

this morning of the remarkable place that peace has in the epistle to the Ephesians. That is the highest presentation of the truth in Christianity, and you have "He is our peace" (chap. 2 : 14). "That he might form the two in himself into one new man, making peace" (chap. 2 : 15). "And, coming, he has preached the glad tidings of peace to you who were afar off, and the glad tidings of peace to those who were nigh" (chap. 2 : 17); and then, as we have it here, "the preparation of the glad tidings of peace" (chap. 6 : 15). The thought of peace is thus emphasised in the epistle that conveys the highest divine thoughts. It shows what the gospel is; it is the gospel of peace.

THE WORK OF THE LORD

1 Corinthians 15 : 58 ; Isaiah 51 : 1–8

I am thinking specially, dear brethren, of the work of the Lord. There is the work of God, so viewed, and of the Father, so viewed, and of the Spirit, so viewed, but I am thinking of the work of the Lord as involving peculiar support. If one compares the gospels, this aspect of the truth fits in with Mark, and the Lord as presented there and in the passage I have read in Corinthians is to be viewed as all-powerful. As He said to Paul as having arrived at Corinth, " For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee ; for I have much people in this city," Acts 18 : 10. It was an undertaking on the part of the Lord to take out of Corinth the much people that He knew were there. The same may apply to any one of our localities or to the whole world. The present time is the time in which the Lord, having bought the field, is taking out of it what He seeks. He will use the field later in other connections, but at the present time there is that in it which He values and He is taking it out through the gospel, but the circumstances require that those who are employed must be protected, so that He says, " No man shall set on thee to hurt thee." Hence, the operation is carried on under His all-powerful wing.

Hence, in Mark we are told that the Lord was carried up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God ; Mark 16 : 19. That is more than is said by the other evangelists. Luke and Mark only record the actual ascension, but Mark adds that the Lord sits at the right hand of God, meaning that He is in the place of supreme power, and then we are told that

His disciples " went forth, and preached everywhere, *the Lord* working with them, and confirming the word with signs following," Mark 16 : 20. That was how matters stood at the outset, and so that we might see the continuance of the Lord's attitude and service, 2 Timothy speaks of the apostle Paul at Rome in the very mouth of the lion, as if nothing could save him. What exercises the apostle must have gone through as at the lion's mouth, for what hand could stay, as far as man could see, the emperor, and what hand could stay the mouth of lions, not only one lion but lions in a den with a Daniel there unprotected ? But the lions' mouths were stopped. The lion at Rome did not have his mouth stopped, but the apostle was delivered from it, which is equal, and, in a way, a more remarkable exploit. " The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me ; . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion," he says ; 2 Tim. 4 : 17. It was the same Lord that, as ascended, sat at the right hand of God and worked with the earlier servants. But now, in a day of brokenness—for 2 Timothy contemplates that—our own times indeed—it is the same Lord, and He stands by His servant when all forsake him. " At my first answer," he says, " no man stood with me." How well the Lord understood that, for when He was taken, " They all forsook him and fled," Mark 14 : 50. He stood there solitary and went through the judgment alone. None but He could do that. But He knew well the heart of His servant at that moment as forsaken, and He stood by him and delivered him from the lion's mouth, and then he adds, " that by me the preaching might be fully known." It is as if the Lord, having taken him up, would see him through and see him through victoriously, triumphantly. How he would realise at that moment the power and the sympathy of Christ ! How he could say, as he does here in 1 Corinthians 15, " Thanks be to God, which giveth

us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

In brief, that is how this subject stands in the New Testament, and, as I have stated, 2 Timothy brings it down to our own times, and that epistle contemplates no surrender at all, but a continuance in the work. "Do the work of an evangelist," Paul says; chap. 4 : 5. That is what I am speaking of particularly, and so I wish to show from Isaiah how this works out in a remnant, because, according to 2 Timothy, we are in remnant times. So, as you will observe, the word is, "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord." That is exactly the 2 Timothy position, for, as naming the name of the Lord we withdraw from iniquity. How could we meet the position otherwise? Iniquity is so powerful in this world and is now contemplated as in religious circles, the word of certain wicked men eating as a gangrene, so that the system has been leavened and there is no hope save by withdrawing. But in withdrawing, it is as naming the name of the Lord, so that the Lord is on our side in the position, even although one has to stand alone like the apostle Paul, but the Lord will stand by you, and there is no power that can cope with Him. As the apostle says elsewhere, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (1 Cor. 10 : 22). With the Lord on our side, as one said, "I shall not be moved."

Then, in addition to that, you have a seal in 2 Timothy: "Having this seal." That is, the withdrawing person—the person naming the name of the Lord who withdraws from iniquity—has a seal, that is to say, he has a moral right to serve. The seal is moral, but nevertheless a mandate that cannot be contested. It bears the divine stamp, for it has on

one side, "The Lord knoweth those that are his; and, Let every one who names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity." The position, therefore, is, "those that are his"—"The Lord knows those that are his." As at Corinth so to-day, He knows everyone in Christendom that is His, and we want all those. The work of God has all those in view, no less than that. We do not know them, it may be, or only a few, but the Lord knows them all, and as we move under His direction we shall find them; He will not fail to direct us.

Then in the passage in 2 Timothy there is the idea of a great house, in which there are vessels to honour and to dishonour, and if one "purge himself from these," that is, those to dishonour, "he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use." That is to say, 'the Lord' involves protection, but 'the Master' is to be served. And what a Master! And then it goes on, "Flee also youthful lusts," a very important word, because the burden of active service must be on the young men and the young women. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you," 1 John 2 : 14. Hence, "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." It is such persons who are addressed here in Isaiah 51. The prophet fits exactly; "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord," and then, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." It suggests the remnant position, separated under the Lord's direction and following righteousness. That leader never dies. It is an important thing to remember that God's principle is to work by leadership, and He is never without leaders, and certainly righteousness never dies, and that is the leader: "Ye that follow right-

eousness." Righteousness has been in the world since Abel, and never leaves it, so that one has always a guide or leader in righteousness. Here it is not this school or that school as in Corinth, but the one great leader that God gives His people, holding at all times, for there is never a time in the history of this world when the idea of right does not exist, and I can follow that even if I have to die for it. So it is, "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord; look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him."

Now I wish you to follow this intently, because it enters, as I might say, into the present position exactly, involving the work of the Lord, and how we may proceed in it in humility and smallness, for we could not be any smaller than Abraham when he was called. He was just one. If God could begin with one to bring in a multitude, as it says, "As the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore," He may do that now; I mean, He can work on that same principle. So that we need not be deterred or discouraged by smallness or fewness; it is a question of accepting the circumstances. As Paul said, "Luke alone is with me." The company may be reduced, but the Lord stood by him; that is the principle, and if we are in a locality with one or two, is there nothing to be done? Abraham was only one, for the way it should read is, "I called him when he was alone," not simply 'alone,' but "*when* he was alone." He was only one. What may not God do with one person?

I want to dwell for a moment on the idea of the rock and the pit, because we have got to go back to the beginning if we are to work rightly. If we are to do that in which the Lord would support us and

protect us, it must be in relation to first principles. So that we are to consider Abraham, that is to say, the rock. A rock has a great place in Scripture ; it is what proceeds from God. The idea of a stone is permanency, but the idea of a rock is firmness ; hence in Timothy, " The foundation of God stands." There could be no change in that. But the foundation is not simply that ; it is something out of which we are hewn. Therefore, the faith is linked up with Abraham as representing God in the manner in which He has come out sovereignly. No one solicited God to come out, as far as we know. It is said of Abraham, " Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood . . . and they served other gods," Josh. 24 : 2. Apparently he was an idolater with the rest until God came in. Who asked Him to come in ? He came in Himself ; He reserves that right, but He came in as the " God of glory " (Acts 7 : 2), and took up one man and made him the root of His thoughts and the repository of His promises. Therefore Abraham represents what we call the objective, that is, what is of God come in in Christ, for that is the idea of the foundation, of the rock. What can there be immutable save what has come in in Christ ? Abraham was a man like ourselves, but it is what he represented. He represents the great patriarchal idea and sovereign intervention and call and blessing. We have all originated thus, every one of us. If we are Christians that is how we have come in ; we are all of God : " Of whom are ye in Christ Jesus," that is, of God. We are of God through Christ ; our spiritual being and status with God is in that way, and we are to consider that in the day of small things.

Then, the pit is the other side, the " pit whence ye were digged." That is to say, the rock is what Christ is from God, and the other the pit, is Christ on our side involving what is brought in out of death. Everything must be brought in in that way and set

up before God out of death, so that the Lord Jesus was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and we are said to have been, "curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth," Psa. 139 : 15. It is the work of God, the coming up, whereas in Abraham the idea is God coming down to us to establish His thoughts and to establish a foundation here. But in Sarah we have the maternal, so that it is not only that I see every thought of God in Christ, but as the apostle says, "To the glory of God by us." It is what the Holy Spirit forms here out of death. In other words, in these last days we have the two great ideas before us in the way of balance, that is, what God is in Christ, and what man is in Christ. Many hold to the one and overlook the other, as if the working out of the assembly were not possible in our days, but it is possible, as I hope to show. We should therefore consider the maternal side, and one might say much from Galatians on that head, but I only touch on it to show that the work of the Lord implies perfect balance between what God is in Christ and what man is in Christ, that is to say, what the assembly is to Christ. Jerusalem above is said to be our mother. That has direct reference to Sarah for she is the mother of us all. Her seed came in not on the principle of nature ; we do not come in on the principle of nature, either from the paternal or the maternal side. Sarah's seed came in on the principle of faith, and from her we all spring, 'as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore for multitude.' It is all spiritual, so that the work of the Lord is carried on in relation to the two great principles of the paternal and the maternal, and thus we are kept balanced. We are kept free from current religious thought. Some would attack Abraham, the rock. You will hardly ever find the Jews referring to Sarah for parentage ; they will always refer to Abraham.

When Samson went down to his wife he took his father and his mother, but then it is said later that his father went down to the woman ; Jud. 14 : 5, 10. The mother is omitted and hence the disaster. Samson proposes a feast and there is affiliation with the Philistines and the consequent revealing of his secret. That is Christendom ; it is disregard of the mother side. I commend that to you. In the work of the Lord in which we are to abound, we are to " Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged," involving both Abraham and Sarah.

Now, to show how all this works out from smallness and from a remnant character I direct you to the later verses I have read in Isaiah 51. Verse 3 speaks most encouragingly of what God will do : " For the Lord shall comfort Zion ; he will comfort all her waste places ; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord ; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." Is that not most exalting in the work of the Lord ? As elsewhere it is said, " The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former," Hag. 2 : 9. It is the prospect that is before us. We are not looking for things to ebb out or die out or wear out ; we are looking on to the greatest possible things, and that is the suggestion here. Then it goes on, " Hearken unto me, my people ; and give ear unto me, O my nation." Although these are days of small things, God has His own way in such circumstances of conveying to us that we are actually His people. Not that we assume to be anything distinctive ; that is not the point here ; it is what God says. As the Lord says, to Philadelphia (Rev. 3 : 8, 9), " I have set before thee an opened door," and " I have loved thee." That means the assembly, but He is saying it to us, that is to say, to those who, as loving Him, do not deny His

name and keep the word of His patience. He has His own way of conveying His thoughts of us. We do not need to assume to be the assembly ; that would be a falsehood, but the Lord gives us to understand that He is thinking of us. He has nothing less before Him than the whole assembly, and so here in Isaiah 51 He speaks about " My people," and then, moreover, He says, " Give ear unto me, O my nation." How touching that is ! How the Jewish remnant of the coming day will be made to understand that in the midst of the great mass of faithless profession God will respect them and give them to know that they are His people and His nation, for indeed they are. As I might say, potentially only the real ones will come into the position, those that are poor in spirit, those that mourn, those that follow righteousness and so forth. Those are the ones, and so in pursuing the work of the Lord and abounding in it in our day the Lord will give us to understand that we are bearing traits of the assembly, not that we are to assume to be it, but if He gives us to understand the position, it would give great moral power in our souls that what we cherish is presently to appear as the heavenly city.

Then it goes on, " For a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people." That is one of the most important things we can notice ; " A law shall proceed from me." God has His own way of asserting His rights, His commandments and His principles. What a testimony that is ! " A law shall proceed from me." We do not make these commandments ; we do not formulate them ; they proceed from God ; they are eternal. But the Lord gives us to understand that He sets them up in connection with those who follow after righteousness, who abound in His work, who as loving Him do not deny His name and keep the word of His patience. And then it goes on, " My righteous-

ness is near ; my salvation is gone forth, mine arms shall judge the people ; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust." You see how we proceed into expansion, how God makes His testimony to expand and to go forth so that the isles wait. If we are thus abounding in the work of the Lord we may rely upon it that these traits will be manifested. It may be in a small way, but the principle holds good.

Then, " Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness." Now you see, we are not only seeking after righteousness, but we know it. As I was saying, righteousness is ever existent, but then, what a thing it is for God to have a people in this world who know it. Jesus leads the way ; He loved it ; He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. He leads the way for us. As we seek after righteousness we soon get to know it. " If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him," 1 John 2 : 29. Morally, it is the greatest thing to have a people in this world who know righteousness and who practise righteousness. So that now the appeal is to persons who know righteousness, and He says further, " The people in whose heart is my law." How beautifully that corresponds with Christ, who loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. The law was in His heart : " In whose heart is my law." I cannot go into detail, but each one of these verses would be enough for a discourse. Think of what is involved in having the law in your heart. It is anticipative of the millennium when God will write His law in the heart and minds of men, but it is greater in this the day of the indwelling Spirit, because the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us " who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit," Rom. 8 : 4.

So it says, " Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings." The work of the Lord will bring us into reproach. We may as well

accept that. To be held in high regard in the work means that we are diluting the truth. The work of the Lord will never be held in high regard by men ; it will always be in reproach ; it will always bring revilings as it did on the Lord, who, " when he was reviled, reviled not again." It says, " If I had not done among them the work which no other one has done, they had not had sin." " But now they have no excuse for their sin." So you see what the work of the Lord is. What a testimony it is ! How it leaves men without excuse ! It may incur their revilings, but then the prophet goes on to say, " For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool ; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." So that there is every incentive for abounding in the work of the Lord. We cannot help feeling the revilings of men, but they are to be eaten by the moth, a very contemptuous reference to man in his most exalted station. Like Herod who slew James by the sword and who would have taken and done the same to Peter, but the Lord stepped in and he was eaten of worms. How ignominious ! That is man in his most exalted station as opposed to the work of the Lord. What can puny man do ? He is to be eaten by the moth like a garment, but My salvation is near and it is for ever. What we are engaged in goes on in triumph into eternity.

FATHERHOOD RESULTING IN ENLARGEMENT

2 Corinthians 6 : 11–14 ; Deuteronomy 33 : 20, 21

The epistles to the Corinthians form a most convenient field for current ministry. Tribute is nearly always laid upon them in our meetings, indicating that what is needed chiefly amongst the people of God is obedience and order. What is needed by us severally is found more in Romans, that epistle and those to the Corinthians running together, although the former is not corrective, whereas the latter two are. We are in a time to which divine correction especially applies, and what I would notice at the outset is the prominence given to the idea of father in the Corinthian epistles as over against that given to the mother in Galatians. These epistles also correspond with that to the Galatians being intended to deliver the people of God from religious bondage and darkness, while the Corinthian epistles are intended rather to deliver us from worldliness. It is obvious that the authority of the father is needed for the latter, whereas the mother has a range of influence and direction inside the house, and so Galatians contemplates the kind of persons that the people of God may be associated with religiously. They are all in the same household outwardly, that is the household of faith, the house of Abraham ; but all have not the same mother, and so the apostle refers to himself in Galatians from the maternal point of view, and cites as scripture Sarah's word, " Cast out the bondwoman and her son," Gal. 4 : 30. That is Scripture, although, primarily, the word of Sarah. It has reference to religious associations which are governed by such a mother as Hagar, that is to say, Jerusalem that now is. As of old, all religion that has come under the beggarly

elements of the world is Hagar in principle, so that Sarah is the authority, as it were, the word of the mother, the true mother, who says, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son." The son of the bondwoman must not inherit with the son of the freewoman. Abraham was loth to do this, as many of us are, but the word was "Hearken to the voice of Sarah," and so the apostle proceeds to say that we, all true believers, are children of the freewoman, that is to say, the assembly viewed as in heaven—Jerusalem above. I would rather say the assembly viewed as above, for above is not always just heaven. Above oft-times means what is morally elevated above all that is on earth, and that is really the thought, that the assembly, viewed in this way as influencing us, is as to the principle of it morally above the current level of religion, and she is free. On the other hand the letters to Corinth, as I said, rather emphasise the father, because it is a question of naughty children, not exactly religious children, but naughty, disobedient children, doing as they will. You can see, therefore, how applicable these things are to current conditions amongst the people of God, where independency, worldliness, pride and partisanship prevail. For such conditions it is a father that is needed, the word of authority. Of old, God called His people's attention to Abraham. "The rock whence ye were hewn," He said, "Abraham your father," and "the pit whence ye were digged," "Sarah your mother," Isa. 51 : 1, 2. These two thoughts run together, but the epistles to the Corinthians deal with the former, that is Abraham. The principle of Abraham in that light was seen in Paul, and so he says, "You might have ten thousand instructors, but you can only have one father," and in Christ Jesus he had begotten them through the gospel; 1 Cor. 4 : 15. That was indisputable. Except they were reprobate, they were his children

in a spiritual way, and so he addresses them here as his children, but he calls them " Corinthians," that is to say, he is not addressing them as in heavenly places, nor is he thinking of the assembly in a universal way. He never takes that ground with regard to the assembly, as the father of it. It was the local position, and so he says, " Corinthians," that is, ' You believers who live in that city.' It is well to be reminded of our local settings, for as soon as the world is mentioned, then I have to think of what my locality is like, whether it be Oldham or Manchester or Chester or Liverpool, and what there may be of a peculiar nature that induces worldliness in the place, that induces the thing that Paul would correct amongst the saints. But he says, virtually, ' I have written to you before and I have heard the effect of the word,' that is to say, they were capable of correction. What is the good of attempting to correct, save where there is capability of correction ? The Corinthians were capable of correction. It is for each one of us to understand and to raise the question with ourselves as to whether we are amenable to correction. How full of this the book of Proverbs is, and how easily we pull in the shoulder and assert our freedom from control, our independency, but the Corinthians were amenable and subject to correction, and so the apostle says, " Our heart is enlarged," 2 Cor. 6 : 11. As he looked towards Corinth in writing the second epistle, his affections moved out, whereas earlier they were crushed in. Those who minister among the people of God know what that means, what it means in seeking to serve to find oneself restricted and hampered because of unsympathetic ears and hearts, whereas here the apostle had got their ears and hearts and they were being corrected, and as he looked towards them, I can think of him as saying, " How free I should be to give an address at Corinth." As he was in his letter free, so he would be free were he

amongst them, and so he says, "Our heart is expanded." What a change had come about in that assembly at Corinth. How effective had been his ministry in the first letter. How the water had done its work, and so now he is free and he says, "Be ye also enlarged, I speak as unto my children," 2 Cor. 6 : 13. What can be of more value with young believers than a true father? There are not many fathers. Perhaps there is not one anywhere who could speak of a local company as his children, but Paul could and he did; that is to say, he seized every advantage the Lord gave him in dealing with these dear Corinthians. Obstreperous as they had been yet the more he loved them. "The less I be loved the more abundantly I love you," 2 Cor. 12 : 15. His affections were not altered; he was only waiting for their hearts to be moved so that his affections might flow as usual. He seized his advantage and used it. "I speak as an answering recompense, Be ye enlarged." How few there are who have been ministered to who have any sense of recompensing. I am not speaking of what is monetary or otherwise—that is a small matter—but of the sense of obligation. It is one of the finest things coming up in the heart of the believer.

I will now illustrate what I have been saying by Jacob in the house of Laban. In the earlier days there he served for love, but his service dropped down later to being purely mercenary. This is abominable among the people of God; but in the early days of his ministry Jacob served for love. That is what he did, for as soon as he saw Rachel coming with her father's sheep, the flock of Laban his mother's brother, he rolled away the stone and watered the flock; Gen. 29 : 10. He served for love. There were other flocks lying about the well. He might have watered them, but he did not. He could tell the owners what to do, but he did not do it. When he

saw Rachel he served for love and then he remained a whole month with Laban in Laban's house. He kissed Rachel and Rachel kissed him ; it was simply a family matter. He remained a month in the house, doubtless carrying on his service as he had begun it, and then Laban says, 'It is time you should get something for this service.' The idea of obligation came up in the heart of Laban. He was righteous. The apostle asserts his rights as a minister in these letters to the Corinthians, but now he says, "For an answering recompense." 'Recognise your obligations to me, in effect, your obligations to God,' for what could Paul do for them save by the power of God? He was God's minister, he drew all his resources from God, and God saw to his wages, his recompense. He was not seeking theirs but them. It was a question of love. "I seek not yours but you." It was a question of love, and he is putting upon them the obligations of love. How many of the young people here who have heard the voice of Christ through a servant feel obligated spiritually? You come to recognise the person through whom the ministry comes as representative of God. He is nothing if not that. He is representative of God as a father. "For an answering recompense," Paul says, "I speak as to my children, Be ye also enlarged." As soon as you begin to recognise spiritual obligations to those through whom the ministry comes, you become enlarged. Laban recognised obligation to Jacob, and what followed upon that was the marriage. As soon as you recognise obligation to God through His servants you begin to see something of the assembly. That is how the matter stands in this passage, and now I want to show from the Old Testament how this thought of enlargement is amplified in God.

As I was saying, it was worldliness in Corinth in a very large measure, and I return to this point for a moment, and feel led to return to it because worldli-

ness creeps in so insistently and insidiously. As soon as the apostle thinks of their being enlarged spiritually he says, " Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever ? " 2 Cor. 6 : 14–16. There is nothing, beloved friends, whatever in common between the things put in contrast in these verses, and so spiritual prosperity hangs on the negation of certain things—that there is to be no fellowship with unbelievers, or unrighteousness, or the temple of idols, or whatever is mentioned. " Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you." God said he would walk amongst them ; He would dwell amongst them and walk amongst them. What a promise that was ! You say, ' Dwelling among us ! that means on the first day of the week.' Surely, but what about walking ? That is not the first day of the week. It is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. If He walks amongst us, then He comes into our homes, our businesses. He undertakes for us in every respect, if He is walking amongst us. " Come out from among them and I will be unto you a father." He is a Father, not His fatherhood in heaven, but His sons and daughters in this setting are those down here. It is a figure. He takes up our cause in times of famine and distress. Any disadvantage arising from social conditions and unions and all such things come under this. God provides for a separated people, so that they should be maintained in enlargement spiritually, that He might have room amongst us. It is a question of room. Light in itself is not room for God. Room for God refers to the enlargement inwardly of our affections. That

is where He has room. He wants room there, and to this end He says, " I will be unto you a father and ye shall be unto me sons and daughters." He takes up that relation to us so that we are protected and cared for as we could not be otherwise, for it is Jehovah Almighty. So that having such promises, He says, " Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness." That is the position, and I want to show from Gad how this is amplified, because Gad is really in this passage, that is to say, in 1st and 2nd Corinthians.

The blessing of Moses the man of God in the passage read in Deuteronomy, takes account of the saints in so many different features which you may look into at your opportunity. Beginning with Reuben and continuing down to Asher, we have the different features of the blessing, and amongst these we have the blessing of Gad. It is of him I wish to speak, because Gad involves the 1st and 2nd Corinthians as I hope to show, and there is a blessing attached to him who enlarges Gad. " Blessed is he that enlargeth Gad." Why is it not applied to Judah or any of us ? Why the enlargement of Gad ? His name does not signify enlargement. Japheth's name signifies enlargement, and there you get the same idea. I would dwell on this for a moment. You will remember how the Spirit of God says Japheth means enlargement. When Ham exposed his father, Japheth and Shem went and took the garment and went backwards and covered the nakedness of their father, and then we have Noah's utterances as to his three sons. I want you to notice this because it enters very forcibly into what I am saying. It was a question of the father. Ham mocked his father, he exposed him. That is exactly what the Corinthians were doing. If they could only bring up things against Paul, how gladly they would have done it, but they could not. They would say, " His letters are weighty, but his bodily presence weak and

his speech contemptible," 2 Cor. 10 : 10. These opposing leaders at Corinth would say all they could. They were Hamites, or rather Canaanites. For Canaan is the family that is cursed, and what does the apostle say, " If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ let him be accursed," 1 Cor. 16 : 22. That is the curse of God upon the Canaanite, and any one who does not love our Lord Jesus Christ will not have Paul but will refuse him. He will speak ill of him. He will expose him if he can. That is the sort of thing, and so before we have the blessing pronounced on the two sons of Noah we have the fact stated that Canaan was the son of Ham. It is not a question of black people in South Africa, it is Canaan the son of Ham. His name means a merchant. Ham means black. He was never cursed. It is a forward look, involving the history of Canaan, and refers to the seven nations in the land of Canaan that were cursed : five of their kings were hanged on a tree ; Josh. 10 : 26. It is a question of disregard of the father as seen in Ham the father of Canaan. Ham mocked his father and exposed him. It is not a question now of the folly of Noah. Whatever his folly was it was wrong on the part of Ham to expose him, and so you see we have Canaan mentioned before we get the curse at all, and then the blessing of Noah. " Blessed be the God of Shem, let Canaan be his servant," and then " Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be," but then what of Japheth ? " Let God enlarge Japheth." That is the thought, beloved. It is that principle the apostle was seeking to get at with the Corinthians, respect for the father, for divine authority, and indeed respect for God viewed as Father in that sense. So that enlargement is the blessing of Japheth. It is a question of respect, you see, and submission to the father and so Japheth is enlarged. One could say quite a little about the enlargement of Japheth both

in the government of God and spiritually. In that son of Noah, God, in His government, prepared beforehand for the taking up of the assembly. It is from Japheth's race that the assembly, in the main, has been secured. It is an enlarged area belonging to Japheth.

Having said so much I come back to Gad, so that we might see how Japheth as well as Gad enters into these letters to the Corinthians. The first thing is, "Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad." Why should he be enlarged? Obviously because he bore the Japheth feature. He dwells as a lion and teareth the arm, etc. That would mean that he had the courage of a lion. The lion, in this sense, is one of the stately things of Proverbs, it is a feature of Christ—the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. It is a question of government, of power in government, and of courage in government, that is what it means. "He teareth the arm with the crown of the head." Of whom? Not of a repentant people, those who are subject to the Father. No, those who oppose. That is what came out in the apostle, the weakening of the opposing arm, and the exposure of the opposing head. They were bringing in Greek learning and natural ability. All that has to be dealt with. I speak for myself. I know how it comes in in the service of God, how one is apt to rely on natural ability and learning. Gad would deal with that and so does Paul in 1 Corinthians. "He teareth the arm with the head," and then it goes on, "He provides the first part for himself." That means, in the better rendering of the passage, that a portion for the law-giver was reserved in his territory. In other words, as a Corinthian, as a true believer, as a devoted lover of Christ, he would make full room for the arm, for the authority of Christ, for Paul. If Paul were to go to Corinth they would receive him with open arms. It would be no sorrow to him. Paul said he

had " In readiness to avenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled," 2 Cor. 10 : 6. The obedience of the Corinthians as a whole was fulfilled. Gad, you see, reserves a portion for the lawgiver. He would love to have him with him. In spite of Paul's severity against sin, a Gad in Corinth would love to have Paul come, and is it not so, that where there is subjection to Christ and keeping His commandments, there is room for Christ : a portion is reserved for the lawgiver ? Why should we be afraid of law ? Certainly not a law that came through Paul, through Christ, the perfect law of liberty. Not only the law, but the lawgiver was to be treasured. There is room for him. If there be no room for the lawgiver in any meeting you may depend upon it it is not owned of God. I know such meetings. Unless there is a portion for the lawgiver it is no use to talk about being gathered to the Lord's name. What about the lawgiver ? There is nothing of any moral value to be attached to any meeting in which there is not a portion for the lawgiver, but if there is a portion reserved for the lawgiver that is one of the reasons why there should be enlargement. Well, there are other things here. We are told he provided the first part for himself. That would mean, if I impose the law on others, I impose it on myself first. How can I awaken my brethren in asserting divine principles save as I am governed by them myself ? Like Deborah, " She dwelt under her own palm tree, between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim," Jud. 4 : 5. That is moral elevation. That is why she had power with her brethren, and so with Gad, he reserved the first part for himself. " He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city," Prov. 16 : 32. If one does not rule his own spirit he is of no value in the house of God, but as soon as a brother or a sister is seen ruling his or her own spirit the brethren will make room for them. They

love to be visited by such. It is a question of the enlargement of Gad. That is what it is, and so to proceed. "He came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel," Deut. 33 : 21. That is the next thing about Gad. He came with the heads of the people. He is not a king, not like Abimelech who would be king, or Adonijah who would be king. He comes with the heads of the people. He loves to think of others. If God is graciously pleased to give ability to another, is it a matter of envy ? It is a matter of wealth. We are a community, and the wealth of one is the wealth of all. The wisdom of one is the wisdom of all. The love of one is the love of all, and so a man like Gad is not envious of the other heads. There are other servants as well as he. He is marked by these features and he comes with them. He is mutual and then it says, "He executes judgment and justice in Israel." How much that is needed, and I believe it is reached on these lines, on the lines of Gad. It enters into the care meeting, as we call it. I apprehend that is where the Gads come together. Others may come to learn from them ; the young brothers may attend, but it is to learn rather than execute justice and judgment. They have to learn. The apostle speaks about the least esteemed in the assembly settling secondary matters, showing what any true Christian can be. He has more wisdom than any worldly man. As having the Spirit of God he has more ability than an ungodly man who might be the Lord Chancellor of the country. Gad comes with the heads of the people and that is the care meeting. What comes out of it is they execute justice and judgment in Israel. I am speaking of principles, not of personal details. It is a question of how things are done, and whether justice and judgment in Israel issue forth from what we call our care meetings, or is it a question of wrangling or

leaving without accomplishing anything? I do not say that the care meeting can accomplish anything, but the assembly can. That is where justice and judgment are executed—in the assembly. The heads come together and counsel and investigate the facts and present them to the assembly, according to the "Wisdom that is from above, first pure and then peaceable . . . easy to be entreated" (James 3 : 17), and so you have judgment and justice done in Israel, that is to say, amongst the saints viewed spiritually.

Well, that is, dear brethren, what I had on my mind, and I think you will see that the line indicated is the guarantee for enlargement under current conditions, for it is the secret of enlargement that is needed, as indicated in the remarks of the apostle in the second epistle to the Corinthians. May the Lord bless His word.

THE ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY

2 Corinthians **11** : 28 ; Leviticus **6** : 24–26 ; **10** : 16–20

What remarks I may make have in view the acceptance of responsibility in regard to the things of God by the people of God. The non-acceptance of responsibility in regard to the things of God in connection with His people is very objectionable to Him, and fraught with loss to the testimony in regard to men, and in regard to service towards Himself. This non-acceptance of responsibility implies that much is neglected, and there are many loose ends in regard of the service of God, and, consequently, opportunity to the enemy to attack and do damage, affecting the public testimony and the service of God. This responsibility applies to all, and anyone formally refusing it is disqualifying himself or herself for the fellowship. Not that such a one among us is not an object of care (as the weak brother in Romans 14), but he is incapable of service. But anyone formally rejecting responsibility disqualifies himself for reception into fellowship. The weak brother is to be received, for the assembly of God, normally, is quite equal to taking on a charge. But where responsibility is denied and not accepted, there is no material for the assembly.

So I feel encouraged to call attention to the acceptance of responsibility, not only for oneself, but also for others. The apostle Paul, in the widest way, accepts responsibility for *all* the assemblies. No one else that I know of, except the Lord, accepts such wide responsibility. He comes very near the Lord. The high priest of old had *all* the names of the children of Israel on his heart and on both shoulders. The saints are so precious in the eyes of Christ that all His strength—both shoulders—is for them, and

it is subservient to His love. It was in this love that He went into death for them, even referring to their very sins, saying, " they are more than the hairs of my head " (Psa. 40 : 12), a wonderful thing, showing how the Lord accepts our responsibility—not that we do not take them on in the way of contrition, but that He has done so in the way of removing them from before God.

So Paul in this eleventh chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians, presenting himself as one to be followed, comes nearest to the Lord, in taking on the burden of all the assemblies, saying : " Who is weak, and I am not weak ? Who is stumbled, and I burn not ? " (*v.* 29). He presents himself as a model. Similarly, to the Thessalonians (young believers), he says, " Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord," 1 Thess. 1 : 6. Well now, you see how he takes on this wide responsibility. What his prayers must have taken in ! He said that he combated in prayer for the Colossians and for " as many as have not seen my face in flesh," Col. 2 : 1. And to the Ephesians he said : " For this cause I bow my knees," Eph. 3 : 14. This does not mean kneeling at a comfortable couch, which may not involve much sacrifice, but *intense exercise.* So with Elijah ; he " put his face between his knees," 1 Kings 18 : 42. Think of what exercise this involved ! There is hardly a service more valuable or more fruitful than agonising in prayer—and in our prayers we enlarge our horizon as we pray for those whom we have never seen. The Lord, in John 17, said, " Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word " (*v.* 20). He came right down to our own times. " He lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father " (*v.* 1).

So Paul said to the Corinthians, " Besides those things that are without, the crowd of cares pressing on me daily, the burden of all the assemblies."

One feels ashamed in reading it, but Paul recorded it for their sakes. He represented the Lord in a peculiar way. Their state was low, but nevertheless they were in his heart's affections. He felt it if any were stumbled or went astray. Their state had come to him, both by common report and by what was shown to him by faithful persons, by "those of the house of Chloe," 1 Cor. 1 : 11. So in our own day a faithful person will not fail to note what is hindering the brethren. Often, in what is told, the real cause of the trouble is left out, but those of the house of Chloe showed it faithfully. Thus, through such a vessel as Paul, the matter is dealt with, and that effectively. So to-day, as our consciences are reached by ministry, it is the word of God to us. Although, through the first epistle, the main thing had been dealt with, yet there were still those who belittled the apostle, and hence this second letter. They were envious of this great apostle. Thus we see how he served the assembly at Corinth in these two letters.

Now in the Old Testament, in Leviticus, those that offered the sin-offering were to eat it (*v.* 26). We often think of the eating of the sin-offering as something irksome, but it was food. While it was the acceptance of responsibility, it was good food—most holy. Hence no priest is at a loss, but is nourished and strengthened by it, and learns daily how to judge sin. Later on (chap. 7 : 6), the trespass-offering is said to be food for "*every* male among the priests," whether they offered it or not. So there is food in dealing with any sorrowful matter. The Lord Jesus identified Himself with the sin, and it is thus that the priests eat.

There was the sin-offering that was *not* to be eaten, but burnt outside the camp (6 : 30, and see Lev. 4 : 12). Christ was "*made* sin for us." Awful thought! But this sin-offering that was to be eaten refers to His taking the responsibility for and bearing

the consequences of our sins. He did this in love. He gives us to know that He has taken up all the responsibility for them and borne the cost.

This eating of the sin-offering is seen, as far as it can be seen in a creature, in the apostle Paul. How he had agonised over that sinful man being allowed to remain among them. He says, in effect, You are not feeling it, nor taking it home to yourselves. They were not eating the sin-offering. Had they been, they might have saved the man. So Paul takes it on himself, and writes to them, and then they take it up thoroughly, and deal with the matter.

Now in Leviticus 10, Aaron is challenged as to why the sin-offering had not been eaten. The whole position was falsified. And so if *we* do not eat the sin-offering, the whole position is falsified. Moses said that the blood had not been " brought in within the sanctuary " (*v.* 18). Where *was* the sin-offering ? Jehovah had taken note of this. Moses diligently sought it. Where was it ? It had been burnt up—in utter disregard of the law. And now, dear brethren, what about this matter that has not been dealt with ? Where is the sin-offering ? The Lord looks for it. Is there utter neglect of it ? Moses shows that it should have been eaten, but found that that had been disregarded—it had been burnt up. So the Lord says : Where is it ? You are not humbled about it. This refers to some current matter—to a sin-offering that has to be eaten—not to the one that had to be burnt. Well, Aaron says : " Such things have befallen me " (*v.* 19). So we say : ' We have so many things to attend to,' etc. Well, Moses accepted Aaron's excuse. The Lord is very gracious, but no *true* priest would speak like that.

Think of the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane. He did not make little of anything. He felt everything. *He* did not say, " Such things have befallen me." He

went through everything and omitted nothing. He endured the buffeting of the soldiers, He prayed, "Father, forgive them." He spoke to the repentant thief; Luke 23. Earlier He had turned round and looked at Peter; Luke 22 : 61. What a marvellous contrast to poor mortal man, who says: "Such things have befallen me." No one ever endured what Jesus endured, yet think of Him at that time commending His mother to John; John 19 : 27. Nothing omitted, not one thing left undone. Every item in that awful position was met by Him, every scripture fulfilled. He said: "I thirst," that the scripture might be fulfilled (*v.* 28). *There* is the One who carried out *everything*, fulfilled every responsibility.

So God has pleasure in anyone coming forward to accept responsibility. If there is something to be done, and someone comes forward and says, 'I will do it,' that pleases the Lord. Thus it may come down to any single one of us, in taking up responsibility, to see that things are carried out. Paul says, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel," 1 Cor. 9 : 16. Why should not *we* take up responsibility like that—in that spirit? As we do so the Lord would say, 'I am with you, as you are with Me.' (See 2 Chronicles 15 : 2.)

FORMATION

GALATIANS 4 : 19 ; ROMANS 12 : 2 ; LUKE 1 : 46–55

THESE Scriptures speak of formation and on this account I ventured to read them hoping that the Lord will support the word on this subject. It is a thought that runs through Scripture, especially in regard to man who is said to be both a creation and a formation. As a formation he represents God, and Adam was a figure of Him who was to come, so that the idea is both old and new. It no doubt enters into the material inanimate creation also and the lower creatures, but properly it is formation from a model. We know there are many formations, so called, in the earth having no moral significance at all, but as applied to man, that is Adam at first, it evidently represents something in the mind of God, either in regard to man in a moral sense or in regard to Him that was to come, that is Jesus. He is said to have " emptied himself, taking a bondman's form, taking his place in the likeness of men," and to have been " found in figure as a man " (Phil. 2 : 7, 8), that is, in relation to what is here. He did not come in as an afterthought, He represents what is primary, so whatever formation marked Adam had Christ as its model. God had Christ in His mind in that last great act of His in Genesis 1.

Indeed the idea of formation appears more prominently in chapter 2 than in chapter 1. It is in chapter 2 that we have the breathing into man's nostrils, not as he was ' created ' but as he was ' *formed* ' (*v.* 7). It must have been peculiarly delightful, dear brethren, to God (the name *Jehovah*-Elohim is used—involving His relation in a special way with man), as forming that noble creature, to breathe into him, he being modelled after the divine ideal, the Man Christ Jesus, the Man now in heaven. Scripture is full of the idea

of manhood all pointing to Christ (not to the man made of dust into whose nostrils God breathed), the wonderful expression of His fulness, the Man out of heaven, the second Man. The second Man is *of* and *out of* heaven, He is also *in* heaven. A remarkable statement came from His own lips in speaking to Nicodemus: "the Son of man who is in heaven" (John 3 : 13), and later He said: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" John 6 : 62. He *is* in heaven as to His inscrutable Being and He has ascended *to* heaven as a Man. He *is* in heaven, but His being there is not the point in the passage (1 Cor. 15 : 47), which says He is "*out of* heaven," that means that His origin is heavenly. He ascended to where He was before, His origin is heaven and wonderful to say: "such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones" (*v.* 48). Think of that, dear brethren! That is the mind of God. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly one." We shall be there, not as strangers, earthly visitants, but as at home, as of the place. There will be no disparity between Jesus, the Man out of heaven, and those who are of Him. He ever remains God, but as Man we have part with Him and: "such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones." How elevating that is, dear brethren, and it is further said that we are to be "conformed to the image of his Son, so that he should be the firstborn among many brethren," Rom. 8 : 29. That word 'many' has to be noted. It is one of the words that we had better leave to speak for itself—the more meaning we put into it the better. There *will* be many; God would stimulate our hearts with the thought of many, not simply many men but *many* brethren of Christ. Not only is He Leader of a chosen race, He is the Firstborn of many brethren, and turning it round to the side of our relations with

God, God is " bringing many sons to glory " (Heb. 2 : 10)—*many*. I suppose I may say there will be just as many sons as there will be brethren. How many there will be I cannot say, but there will not be too many for the counsels of God, nor will there be too few, all will synchronise with the counsels of God.

In view of all this, how important that we should take in the idea of formation now, because it is all in view of present testimony, as I hope to show, and in view of the future of our great calling, as the apostle says : " I pursue, looking towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus," Phil. 3 : 14. You can understand the apostle's deep feelings in writing to the saints in the different gatherings or to the assemblies in Galatia, because they were going back instead of being formed according to God. They were taking on the bondman form, *not* the bondman in the sense in which Paul speaks of it in Philippians 2, but the bondman feature as seen in Hagar, the kind of bondman that has to be cast out. Think of the apostle Paul's deep feelings as he contemplated the beggarly elements, the *beggarly* things, and so he speaks to them as to persons that were shallow in their formation. They were believers and like many of us who would be very exuberant as to something fresh, something telling, but as soon as that passed away they would drop back to their old level. So he says, " I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me," Gal. 4 : 15. That does not denote a steadiness of spiritual growth but a certain exuberance that is not to be trusted, for they turned back and came under the influence of others and, in speaking of them thus, he breaks out in a reproachful spirit. He says : " my little children," without finishing his previous sentence. The thing came into his mind that those dear children were drifting back. He says, " I desire . . . to change my

voice" (*v.* 20), they were naughty children, giving heed to false teaching. How easily we turn an ear to the lie, even in a simple way, but it only leads to greater deception. So he says: "of whom I travail in birth again"—*again*; he had gone through deep concern about them already and now he is forced to go through it again. The Lord would speak to any of us here who may be in any way growing cold (because the enemy will try to get you, as sure as possible), it may be by beginning to criticise the brethren, to be displeased with them. The enemy will get your ear and worse things will happen, hence the necessity for formation, so that he says: "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

Now that is an expression that perhaps may not be clear to us all, nor do I pretend to understand it fully, but it is to be noted. It is an expression coming out of a profoundly exercised heart, that is the heart of Paul as contemplating the possibility of the whole of Galatia going back to the law, to mount Sinai, going back to the bond-slave state, that formation which is to be *cast out*, as says the scripture, "cast out the bondwoman and her son" (*v.* 30). Ishmael represents a *formation* but of a kind that is to be cast out. It is a very solemn matter, dear brethren, to turn the ear to the tempter, to take on the beggarly elements of Christendom, not God-made Christianity, but man-made Christendom. "For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia" (that is in the desert, where there are no springs of God, where Babylon is to be found by and by) "and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children" (*v.* 25). We must be on our guard not to be one of those children. What the apostle had in his mind is *another* formation, that is of Christ, a formation according to pattern. The formation is subjective, the pattern is objective. The pattern is *Christ*, just as Moses was shown the pattern of the tabernacle on

the mount, all things were to be made according to the pattern. So I can make room in my heart and mind for Christ presented objectively, which means that there is an ideal and as the gospels present God's ideal to me, I say, That is for me. Paul said, "no longer live *I*, but Christ lives in me," Gal. 2 : 20. Paul was displaced by Christ, that is the idea—formation. Formation in that sense is not simply after any particular feature, it is the whole Christ, with all His features, that is my ideal—that Man is my Man, to be simple, in spite of myself. No longer I, but Christ. God intends that the gospel be presented to us in power, to so affect us that we prefer Christ to ourselves. I prefer Christ to myself, that is the principle. Christ as presented in Romans 7 helps greatly, but I cannot go into that now.

I do not form myself, the formation is God's work. I can no more form Christ in myself that I can be born again of myself. That is God's work, but then I am responsible as to both, that is what God presses upon me, the idea of responsibility, and I cannot afford to be without being born again. You will understand me, there is such a thing as being born again and the Lord speaks of it in an extraordinary way, "Ye must be born again," John 3 : 7. So I cannot afford to be without that. But it is a work of God. Then there is such a thing as the formation of Christ in me and I cannot afford to be without that—others have it, why not I ? God is doing this, He is forming us as He formed Adam, but the element of responsibility enters into *my* position, which was not so in the case of Adam. It is an act of God, apart from any element in the material, but not so that I am not responsible. Therefore I have to make room for God to work and it is a moral process which has to be understood. God is working with others, why not with me ? If not, why not ? Something must be hindering on *my* side, surely.

Formation should be going on in me so that *Christ* might be formed in me. It is not a mere matter of light, the light brings the objective to me, the light shows the Model. I want to make room for that Person in all His features and God says, 'I will put Him in you.' He works according to my intelligence of what He Himself shows to be the Model. So He shows me Christ and He says, 'I want a place in you for that Person, I have given Him the highest place in heaven and I want you to give Him a place in your heart and mind.' That Person is to be in you, there could be nothing greater, than that that Person should be in me. The product is that I am like Christ, formed after the image of God's Son.

Gideon's mother must have had a great ideal, certainly a greater one than his father could have presented to her, but her sons were like Gideon. "What sort of men were they?" said Gideon. "They were like you," was the answer: "As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the sons of a king," Judges 8 : 18. That gives the idea of formation. So the true believer is like Christ, not like Ishmael. Anyone who is under law, under man-made religion, is not like Christ. It may be there is a mixture, but God hates mixtures, diverse things put together, oxen and asses hitched together—even a mixture of wool and linen was forbidden. Associations and organisations *may* have something of God in them, but they are man-made. Man is pleased to take something of God to embellish what he has got and God does not like that. It is a *system* that is represented in the thought of a mother. Hagar represents one and Jerusalem above represents the other, yet the mother is not the model, but the father. All that God is as presented in Christ, *that* is the model, and God is seeking a place for Him in every one of us, so that He may be formed in us and if He is to be so formed it involves disallowance. I wonder how much we

have got on on this line, the spirit of disallowance.

Now Romans 7 means that I have got authority in my own establishment, "*I myself*" (*v.* 25). *There* is a man who has found his feet, it is no longer the flesh ruling. "*I myself* with the mind serve God's law"—*I myself*. That is the real beginning spiritually, that you find your feet in your own establishment and the Holy Spirit supports you in that. Who is the deliverer? "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," *He* is the Deliverer, but He is the Husband too. We are "to be to another, even to him, who has been raised up from among the dead in order that we might bear fruit to God" (*v.* 4). Christ is the fruit to be brought out femininely and, by subjection, formation is produced in that sense. It is a reproduction of Christ, so that we can say that God sees Him. God sees Him as femininely presented in Canticles, the bride is really a reproduction of Solomon.

Well now that is the thought I have and from what I have said you will see that it is a question of finding your feet in your own establishment. You are left to it, the will of God, and the will of God is the reproduction of Christ in me, so that "no longer live *I*, but Christ lives in me; but in that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God," Gal. 2:20. It is all personal, beautifully so. The principle of displacement comes in, of disallowance of the old formation, to make room for the new, that Christ in all His glorious features should be formed in me.

Well, Romans 12 shows how Paul has this in mind. The idea of formation is there, but he uses the word 'transformation,' that is the going over from something else. In contrast to conformation to the world, there is the transformation by "the renewing of your mind." It is a question of the mind: "that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (*v.* 2). That is the initial idea

of it. I think I have begun on the proper verse to bring in the great exercise of the soul as to this matter. There is so much of this man-made system, which is just the bondmaid state again, and it has to be cast out with all its products.

In Mary I thought we had a beautiful example of formation, though it may be in obscurity. It is not said that she represents formation but I think you will see that she does. She appears amid several worshippers in this chapter. It is a wonderful chapter, this first of Luke, one of the most remarkable in all Scripture, very lengthy. It is a chapter that introduces, as no other part of Scripture does, the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. We get more in this scripture about that than anywhere else, so that it is peculiarly sacred and holy. It is surrounded by holy feelings, it is bathed in holy feelings so that there should be the exclusion of all taint, and you cannot read it rightly without that, the exclusion of all the taint that comes from natural curiosity. So we have such persons as John the baptist spoken of as filled with the Spirit, and Elizabeth filled and Zacharias filled with the Spirit. That is the suggestion as to the understanding of this wonderful chapter. We must be filled with the Spirit because we shall be tainted otherwise, and the truth will be obscured in that way.

It is not said that Mary is filled with the Spirit, it may appear that she is behind the others but I think you will conclude that this is rather a tribute to Mary. What she says is not the result of a sudden coming in of the Spirit, though such a thing is not to be deprecated, of course. It is delightful to realise the Spirit coming in at any given time in power. Even the most shallow of us spiritually may come under His influence and speak as we never spoke before. One has heard that as well as experienced it and we should look for it. The assembly is the sphere to-day for

the activities of the Spirit of God and He may come in and possess the shallowest of us and we may catch a beautiful note. We have, here in this chapter, an unborn babe actually moving because of the voice of Mary, the *voice* of *Mary*. It does not say she had the Spirit, I am not saying she had not, but it shows *what* was there, what that voice was, it was the voice of *formation*. Marvellous thing to think of! So, you see, after Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, she cried out, in a spirit of worship, and said: "and whence is this to me that the mother of *my Lord* should come to me" (*v.* 43). What precious light pervaded the scene as these two holy women were together in Judæa, in the hill country, elevated from the scene below. How beautiful the word that "the mother of *my Lord* should come to me." It was the salutation of the mother of her Lord, and her voice, that so affected Elizabeth and the Holy Spirit came in on that. So it is a question of formation, what is, so to say, there permanently, not a sudden incoming of the Spirit, great and glorious as that is, but what is there permanently.

We cannot have anything much in the locality without this steady permanent formation, not an undulating kind of experience, a happy Lord's day, a dull Monday, a duller Tuesday and so on, that is not the idea of formation. Formation is a steady thing and so you see here how beautifully Mary speaks, she could distinguish between her soul and spirit. She says: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things"—notice what *He* hath done to her—"and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation" (*vv.* 46–50). These are not spasmodic things, they

are steady permanent experiences that she had as contemplating Him, what can be relied upon, whether, so to speak, the north wind blows or the south or the east or the west, this stands. It is the work of God. It stands now and will stand eternally, for it is the work of God. So that you can see, dear brethren, how important it is to make room for this if we are to continue, and the Scriptures are full of the idea of continuance, not simply what I am now, but the continuance to the end on a proper level of spirituality. So it says in Ephesians 5 : 18, " be filled with the Spirit," as if you should never be otherwise, not empty and fill again, but *filled*, and it cannot be aside from this formative work. As Christ has a definite place in the soul I am so intelligent inwardly that I am able like Mary to discern between the hidden parts, and can, with the psalmist, call upon all that is within me to praise God. I think you will agree that Mary's word here contemplates all that, she speaks of " generation to generation," and of the great things that have been done to her and how " He hath showed strength with his arm. . . . He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things ; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy." Notice it is not here that He *will* do this, nor *can*, but that He *has* done it. The formation is in the knowledge that she had of God, she speaks of what He *had done* and that is permanent with God, it is done for ever.

That is what I had in mind and I think you can see how important it is, as regards our enjoyment and our services in any way and our continuance in testimony here, that there must be formation, and if there is to be formation room must be made for it. I am responsible as to it, I am responsible to God, and God effects it as I allow Him.

DIVINE APPOINTMENT

Psalm 114 : 1, 2 ; Judges 1 : 1–15

J.T. Judah (whose name signifies ' praise ') has a unique place in Scripture as representing the idea of divine appointment based on a certain character in the person or persons appointed, whether that character be indicated prophetically, or whether it exist actually at any given time ; so that it enters into localities as well as the general testimony of God. We are told that " the gifts and calling of God are without repentance " (Rom. 11 : 29), and that " God has set certain in the assembly," 1 Cor. 12 : 28. That is a question of His sovereign selection for certain services, and, as in the case of the apostle Paul, the ministry God had appointed to him was to go through, as he says, " That by me the preaching might be fully known," 2 Tim. 4 : 17. Whatever others might have thought, that is how the preaching should be fully known. If others came according to God into the service, such as Apollos, the apostle made plenty of room for them in his own sphere of service. Although Paul had nothing to do with the instruction of Apollos at the outset, yet Apollos served in relation to him with the heartiest co-operation, and acceptance, too, by the apostle, whose position was not impaired by any further appointments of God or other help brought in. I thought we could see in the Psalm the place that Judah had ; he was Jehovah's sanctuary. His name signifies ' praise ' ; and although the facts in Exodus hardly bear out the idea of *Judah* being " His sanctuary " yet it was in the mind of God, doubtless, in view of characteristics that should fit in with the idea of the sanctuary, whether they were current at the time, or whether they were prophetic. God, knowing the

end from the beginning, makes His appointments accordingly.

P.L. Would the lowliness which the sense of sovereignty would produce contribute to the spirit of mutuality ?

J.T. Just so. You feel that if God puts one forward, either by prophetic indication or by direct support at the time, it is according to His perfect knowledge of the person or persons. And the name given to Judah undoubtedly was prophetic ; it indicated that there should be praise, which surely has to do with the sanctuary.

E.C.R. Is the recognition of divine sovereignty and mutuality—divine appointment and making room for one another—the way praise is helped practically ?

J.T. I think so. I think mutual co-operation makes room for the sanctuary, and that is what comes out in Judah pre-eminently. He had a large territory allotted to him, but he was magnanimous. He represents the love—the greatness of love—which is not selfish or restrictive ; it welcomes others to share with it what it has.

H.E.F. Have you in mind, in saying that, that Judah asked Simeon to go with him ?

J.T. Yes. Referring back to Joshua 19 : 1–9, we would all remember that Simeon's portion or allotment was inside Judah's. God could easily have given Simeon a portion otherwise ; He could have given Judah a smaller portion and given Simeon his by itself. But this is the way God elected to have it, for the very reason just suggested, that is, to bring out in Judah what was there. God loves to bring out the good that is in us.

E.W.L. Judah's spirit in making room for Simeon, of whom it had been said, " I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel," (Gen. 49 : 7), was really of God.

J.T. I thought so. God loves to bring out the good that is in us, and we are tested sometimes in order that the good might be brought out. If the good is not in us it is not brought out; there is exposure; but in Judah's case the good was there.

E.W.L. The Lord Jesus Christ of necessity must come of the tribe of Judah.

J.T. All that enters into it; that is to say, what is potential as well as what is actual enters into the selection of Judah for this first place. As we were remarking, his name indicates much in a potential sense, and his part in somewhat modifying the hostility of his brethren towards Joseph indicates there was something good in the presence of bad. In the presence of evil in others he and Reuben had something good in them, which God always takes account of. Reuben would have delivered Joseph entirely, and Judah prevailed on his brethren not to kill him; Gen. 37. The idea of influence for good comes out in Judah, and then the part he takes in relation to Benjamin in procuring the food in Egypt and his speech before Joseph (Gen. 44), all bring out this element of good—this predominance of good. He shines where he is greatly needed.

E.W.L. You have something in your mind as to why Judah was chosen at this particular moment in connection with this character of conflict.

J.T. I thought the good was showing itself in a very distinct way in Judah, especially in Caleb; for the tribe has to be accredited with all that attaches to it.

H.E.F. While you make a good deal of God's sovereign choice, would you say that the history of Judah shows that there was nothing arbitrary in that choice; there were certain features that justified that choice?

J.T. That is what I thought. Even if the features be not present when God makes the choice, they are

there potentially, and *He* knows; in due course they come to light. *We* cannot always judge from the outset; we do not always see as God sees, but if *God* gives a place of prominence to any, He knows why, and He loves to bring out the features that He knows are there.

H.E.F. Is it our business to recognise that sovereignty?

J.T. It is indeed, and then the one that is in an appointed position is great enough to make room for others.

E.C.R. In Judges 1 Judah says to Simeon, "Come up with me into my lot, and let *us* fight against the Canaanites." Is mutuality indicated in the "let *us*"?

J.T. That is the *brother* who is speaking. First we have: "And it came to pass after the death of Joshua that the children of Israel asked Jehovah, saying, Which of us shall go up against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And Jehovah said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. And Judah said to Simeon his *brother*, Come up with me into my lot, and let *us* fight against the Canaanites, and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot; and Simeon went with him" (*vv.* 1–3). It is a very beautiful beginning to the book of Judges.

J.H.B. What is the bearing upon ourselves of these thoughts relating to Judah?

J.T. They refer to anyone whom God sees fit to put forward in His service. Then if He sees fit to put another forward in His service the question will be: Will the first make room for the second? Will they work together? That is, I think, the present bearing of a passage like this.

J.H.B. I think that is helpful. Was there another tribe more prominent than Judah for a time before he came to the front?

J.T. Yes, the birthright was Joseph's. Primarily

the birthright was Reuben's, but he lost it. Joseph got it on the principle of sovereign selection, and now Judah has the first place. So that someone has been displaced ; indeed, twice there has been displacement on the principle of sovereignty. Now how is Judah going to behave ? Through this book you will notice that Ephraim, who was the leading tribe according to the place Joseph had, is arbitrary ; that is, he was not equal to the position, and suffered accordingly ; whereas Judah is quite equal to the position here, and I think he represents what runs right through, for royalty belongs to Judah, all centring in Christ. It is the spirit of Christ that makes room for others.

J.H.B. Does Psalm 78 bear on this ?

J.T. " And he rejected the tent of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah " (*vv.* 67, 68).

J.H.B. Historically that came to light later than what we are reading about.

J.T. Quite so. Psalm 114 makes the choice anterior to both these incidents. Then Zechariah says, " Jehovah shall save the tents of Judah first," chap. 12 : 7. And then we know that " our Lord has sprung out of Juda," as we are told in Hebrews 7 : 14.

E.C.R. Revelation 5 is very fine : " the Lion of the tribe of Juda " prevails eventually.

J.T. The prevailing spirit for good comes to light ; " the Lion of the tribe of Juda . . . hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof " (*v.* 5).

P.L. David was the subject of sovereignty as the Psalmist says : " He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds," Psa. 78 : 70. Then, in relation to the mighty men, does he make room for the spirit of mutuality in others ?

J.T. He does indeed. He made too much room for Joab, but that is another thought. I think that

is rather a weakness; Joab was "too hard" for him; that is another thing, but, generally speaking, the room he makes for the mighties is very fine.

E.W.L. God would support that which is the outcome of His own sovereign activities?

J.T. He does; He comes in to make good what He knows is there. He knows the end from the beginning, and if He makes an appointment He has that in view. The history of Judah throughout supports the prominence which the tribe acquires.

J.B. Is this the way things work out in localities, that there should be those who may be regarded as divinely appointed, that such would recognise others, and then there would be praise to God as an outcome?

J.T. That sets out what I have in mind very distinctly.

J.B. The great issue would be in praise to God.

J.T. It is the great end in view in all the testimony of God, that all is to culminate in His praise. The book of Psalms is the testimony to that. The great end in view is the praise of *all* to Jehovah.

J.B. Hence the importance of what you have suggested with regard to co-operation.

J.T. The seriousness of refusing that is seen in Diotrephes of whom John says, he "receives us not," and further he "casts . . . out of the assembly," 3 John 9, 10. Diotrephes would not admit of others serving with him. There was the spirit of intolerance; whereas we get the opposite here in Judah. He speaks to his brother, asking him to go with him, and they go together and fight together. Then note the recurrence of Judah's name: in verse 4: "Judah went up"; in verse 8: "The children of Judah fought against Jerusalem"; then verse 9: "Afterwards the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites"; and verse 10: "And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron." The Spirit of God seems to love to name

Judah in this connection, as if God was pleased with the state of Judah at the moment in his movements, so that He repays him so far for his largeness of view. Judah is ready to take on Simeon, and Simeon is ready to go with him and fight in a subordinate way, but nevertheless to fight. So there is success and victory.

Rem. The merging of Simeon in Judah in that way is very beautiful; Simeon does not seem to be receiving any prominent place, but is content to be merged in Judah.

J.T. That is the thought: Jehovah did not say anything as to Simeon fighting with him, but He had given him a place in the territory of Judah, and Judah's seeking the co-operation of Simeon here shows the excellent relations that existed between them.

P.L. Would Moses have all that in mind in the blessing of Judah: "Hear, Jehovah, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people; may his hands strive for them; and be thou a help to him against his oppressors," Deut. 33 : 7 ?

J.T. That fits in with what we are saying; also Jacob's word: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be," Gen. 49 : 10. That is very beautiful as showing what was there, as I said, either actually at the time, or potentially, God knowing all.

E.C.R. Why do they take Adoni-Bezek, with his thumbs and great toes cut off, to Jerusalem, where he dies ?

J.T. You will observe that it says of the children of Judah that they had taken Jerusalem and burnt it with fire: "And the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire" (*v.* 8). Jerusalem belonged to Benjamin; why then should Judah take

it ? Benjamin makes no complaint ; had he been a quarrelsome brother he would have made a complaint, but he had good reason to regard his elder brother Judah. Judah had spoken most touchingly of him to Joseph, and therefore Judah taking Jerusalem shows that there were excellent relations between him and Benjamin too. Obviously Benjamin valued the service rendered, for it was one of his cities. He could not possibly suffer loss by the capture of it by Judah, and he makes no complaint so far as we can see. So that Jerusalem has a place in a spiritual sense as taken by Judah ; it was to be " the city of the great king," Psa. 48 : 2. It is to have a place equal to Judah's own, henceforth to be associated with Judah in a special way as the royal city. Now there must be something in that place, spiritually, to deal with such a man as Adoni-Bezek ; there must be something there to deal with a condition like that in the best way. They deprive him of what signifies his natural power ; he was a man of great natural power—thumbs and great toes indicating natural power—what we might rely on naturally in the service of God ; and it is a great service to deprive us of that—to render that null and void in us. He died at Jerusalem. They brought him to Jerusalem, indicating the kind of influence that is at Jerusalem, Judah having already captured it.

E.C.R. If the features of Jerusalem in a spiritual sense were found with us, would that kind of element among us die ?

J.T. I think so ; there are elements like this and you know what to do with them. Certain may have been prominent, and may have done certain things ; they are on our hands, and Jerusalem is the best place for them. It is a question of spiritual influence instead of direct discipline ; only that influence can bring down this sort of thing. Jerusalem stands for what is general against what is local. One great

thought is "Jerusalem above" (Gal. 4 : 26), not simply, "Jerusalem in heaven," but "Jerusalem *above*," giving it a certain predominance and influence because of its elevation. I think many are helped that way who are unduly local, by being brought under the influence of what is general, which is what Jerusalem stands for.

J.A.P. As we are all brought under the teaching of the Spirit of God are we led to value what is general ?

J.T. I think it is a great day when we emerge from what is merely local to what is general, for the general idea is necessarily greater ; I am afraid many of us are unduly local.

E.C.R. "Judah was his sanctuary" is a matter of divine appointment, but it says further "Israel his dominion," Psa. 114 : 2.

J.T. Just so : Israel brings in a wider thought.

R.O.S. Would the children of Israel asking Jehovah "Who shall go up for us . . . first ?" show that they recognised that it was "his dominion" ?

J.T. There was the recognition of Jehovah's rights and of His sway. This thought of Jerusalem is one of the finest in the chapter really, if it is understood—if we read it from *our* understanding of Jerusalem ; and this is the only way to read the Old Testament aright ; we must read it with the eyes of the New Testament to get help and detail.

E.W.L. In that way we should be great gainers by coming under the influence of "Jerusalem above . . . which is our mother."

J.T. It has delivering power, and such men as Adoni-Bezek die ; they cease to be what they were. They had executed discipline upon him, but they did not kill him ; that is, to put it in Christian language, they did not exclude him from fellowship. They brought him where his natural proclivities ceased to

act against the truth; he would be overwhelmed there.

H.E.F. What have we to learn from the way Adoni-Bezek had treated the seventy kings?

J.T. It shows what sort of man he was—the cruelty that was there; and it is what we are all capable of, even in the things of God, if we are acting on the line of fleshly ability and power. In Jerusalem a man like this is rendered null and void, so to say; his power is taken from him. But if he moves where there is little spirituality he may yet do damage. Jerusalem represents what is spiritual. A man may be harmless in a spiritual meeting when he might do damage in an unspiritual one. He recognises the righteousness of God's ways; that is what is so encouraging about him (*v.* 7); you could not retain him in fellowship otherwise. But he is not spiritual; so he is not a person to be at large; he is better under spiritual influence with persons to look after him in that way.

E.C.R. How would "the upper springs and the nether springs" connect with this?

J.T. I think in these lie the power to deal with such conditions. The position of Judah deserves great attention; the recurrence of the expression 'Judah' as representing something that pleases God in this connection; that is to say, a brother, or brothers, put forward by God in His service and quite equal to receiving help from others without any jealousy, quite equal to receiving them and profiting by their co-operation; that is the point, I think. So God mentions Judah over and over again because He is pleased with him under those circumstances. I do not think we sufficiently take account of the part divine Persons have in the service here on earth. Every meeting affords something for God if it is spiritual; divine Persons get more out of such meetings than any of us, and in the circumstances

mentioned here Jehovah had great pleasure in Judah ; He mentions him so frequently and helps him too. And then we see the kind of support that comes in in connection with Othniel and Achsah, because they are to continue this. The spirit of Judah, if it is to be continued, is to be on those lines, through " the upper springs and the nether springs."

J.H.B. Are two different kinds of spirituality seen in Othniel on the one hand and Achsah on the other ?

J.T. Othniel is a warrior, because if this service of Judah is to be continued we have to be warriors, and warriors of a superior kind, because the service to be rendered involves the overthrow of what represents the world of literature. One who sets himself to overthrow that among the brethren has a heavy war on hand. He will have to suffer. So that Othniel is a man of courage. But then he is a man of affection too ; he has something in his mind as a prize, and in that he represents the spirit of Christ. The end of all this war is to secure the assembly in principle, and that is worth while. The Lord Jesus gave all for that.

R.O.S. David asked about the prize before he went to slay Goliath ; 1 Sam. 17 : 26.

J.T. There should always be that—an incentive—as indeed in the Lord's case : " Who for the joy that was set before him," Heb. 12 : 2. That is a perfectly right thought, and appears here in a striking manner in Othniel. There is a prize in the end. And so with Jacob ; he went to Padan expressly for a wife under the orders of his father and mother, but the question of a wife did not come up in Padan until Laban enquired about wages. A wife would be the wages ; Gen. 29 : 18. That is what every servant should be labouring for. As soon as our brethren around us recognise any obligation to us, we say, We do not want yours but you. When Laban raised

the question of wages, the answer was Rachel, that is, the assembly. Anyone not labouring with that in view is not in accord with the mind of Christ. It is a question of having the assembly in view in all our service, so that Christ may have the assembly, and that is what entered into Othniel's exploit here. Achsah, in her position, is equally true ; she recognised that the position required springs of water. She moved her husband first to ask of her father a field, but when she approaches her father herself she seems to be more aggressive ; as if the nearer we get to God the more encouragement we have to pray. She asks for " springs of water," and she gets them.

J.H.B. These things would represent certain features which would be for the glory of God in His people—the woman representing the subjective state pleasing to God.

J.T. Judah's spirit is to be continued. We must consider Othniel and Achsah as to what they represent. If we have rightly understood the position of Judah we can intelligently and profitably consider the position of Othniel and Achsah because they come in as of the family that, in this particular setting, gives such distinction to Judah. We must consider Caleb in this particular setting. The thought of belonging to the tribe of Judah is seen in Caleb's time, and again in David's time, and also in that of Christ.

P.L. You would never trust your thumbs and great toes once you have learned to prove what the upper and lower springs suggest. Would not the thumbs suggest upper power, and the great toes the lower ?

J.T. I think the thumbs would allude to the power of intelligence. The thumb is the strongest finger. You do get the index finger also in Scripture—a very interesting subject—but the thumb suggests the power of intelligence—what it may do in keeping

people down (as suggested by the expression " under his thumb "). That is a poor thing, if God is seeking to put certain ones up or use them alongside one. The idea of the great toe may be the power to kick or do harm to persons.

E.W.L. So that great as a warrior might be he would not continue the conflict for its own sake ; he would have something greater and nearer his heart, more important to him than victory.

J.T. Very good; you mean Achsah, typical of the assembly. Victory would be secured by the beautiful way indicated here of carrying on the service, that is, the upper and nether springs. Instead of using one's own natural power one relies on the power of God, by self-judgment making room for the Spirit—the power of the Spirit of God. As the prophet says, " not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts," Zech. 4 : 6.

E.C.R. Achsah says, " Give me a blessing ; for thou hast given me a southern land "—that would be the position ; but for the gain and enjoyment of that you need the upper and nether springs.

J.T. That is what I think really takes the place of the thumbs and the great toes, which represent natural power.

J.H.B. What do the upper and nether springs severally represent ?

J.T. I suppose the upper springs might be taken as alluding to Ephesians—the elevated side of things. The nether represent what is here. As has been suggested, the toe is the power below—the lower affections. The nether springs would include, say, John 4, where the well springs up.

J.H.B. Would the nether springs suggest the Spirit as meeting and displacing that which is of the flesh in us, and the upper the Spirit as leading us into the great thoughts of God ?

J.T. Quite so. The nether springs involve, I think, the complete displacement of what is peculiarly mean about us—the vicious things that we are capable of in speaking against others. They originate in the lower affections, and so Peter says that we are to lay aside " all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil speakings," 1 Pet. 2 : 1. That is all those mean things that so mark men and women in this world—the mean things that are current, that are employed against persons whom we do not like. I think " the lower springs " imply that all that is negatived.

J.H.B. What is meant by the expression you have used : " the lower affections " ?

J.T. As soon as they are purified (as in the case of the woman in John 4) you can appeal to what is within you ; you can call upon all that is within you to praise God (see Psalm 103 : 1). All those affections are now suitable for divine praise, instead of being employed for the expression of the flesh. So that Romans 7 gives the process through which we are called upon to go if we are to reach " the nether springs." It is an introspective sort of process, but you emerge as on the Lord's side—like the sons of Levi, after Moses came down from the mount ; Exod. 32 : 26. He could not bring the law into the camp ; and that is just how it is with a person who has not gone through Romans 7 ; the law has to be broken outside, as it were, because the flesh is always against the law of God, it ever serves sin. So that it is a question of being on the Lord's side—whether I am on the Lord's side authoritatively or not ; whether I can go right over on to the Lord's side or whether the flesh holds me. So that the process results in : " So then *I myself* with the mind serve God's law " (Rom. 7 : 25) ; that is, I have found my feet spiritually ; I am now dominant in my own establishment, and say, like Joshua : " As

for me and my house we will serve the Lord." I am on the Lord's side.

W.H.H. Did not both these features appear in Caleb? Can we not trace it back? We can see how he appreciated divine wealth in the land, and how he met difficulties with his brethren.

J.T. Joshua 14 would bear out what you are saying; Caleb comes to Joshua and says in effect, 'You remember the word of Jehovah concerning me and thee at Kadesh-barnea, after I had been sent to search out the land.' He is a man who can go back on his history without a tremor; he can call attention to what he was. He was on the Lord's side. He can go back forty years and he was spiritual then. He had, so to speak, gone through Romans 7. He kept with the people of God; he never gave them up; he went all the way round with them; he refers to "when Israel *wandered* in the wilderness" (*v.* 10). He admits that that was the condition of things; there was no definiteness about Israel, but he was definite. That is the kind of thing here in the beginning of Judges; it is Judah, but the Judah of Caleb's time. That is the idea, and now Caleb is providing for a continuance of that in his son-in-law and daughter.

J.A.P. Should that experience of Romans 7 be gone through early in the history of the believer?

J.T. That is the thing; can I refer back, as Caleb did, to earlier days? What were my experiences then? This process taken on early makes room for the nether springs. Young people are very prone to these vicious things against others; but now instead of evil speakings and the like I have the wholesome thoughts of God, what is of God.

E.C.R. Does that come out in Colossians 3 : 12, 13 : "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another,

and forgiving one another, if any should have a complaint against any ; even as the Christ has forgiven you, so also do *ye*" ?

J.T. I think that is the idea. The nether springs provide for all that.

R.O.S. We read in Psalm 84 : 5–7 : " Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, they, in whose heart are the highways. Passing through the valley of Baca, they make it a well-spring ; yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings. They go from strength to strength : each one will appear before God in Zion."

J.T. Those are the kind of persons that continue the principle seen in Judah here.

E.W.L. It is encouraging to see what you say, that God would preserve these things down through the generations, bringing in another generation a step in advance of the previous one.

J.T. To bring it down to a spiritual application : what time in Judah's history have I lived in ? The name means ' praise,' and his history is always culminating in that. Have I been in accord with the period of Caleb ; with " the upper springs and the nether springs " ?

P.L. Do you think we might have, at the close, a panoramic view of Judah's history at every point to bring out the varied excellencies of Christ ?

J.T. It is a very fine study to find out what these features of Judah are, and whether one is in accord with them. This is one of the finest periods in Judah's history, because both here and in Joshua 15 we have the history of this incident. God is given first place in regard of it.

J.H.B. What do we learn from the fact that Othniel was the first of the deliverers ?

J.T. He was a man of resources. In Judges 3 we are told : " The anger of Jehovah was hot against

Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia" (meaning Syria of the two rivers). That means he was a king of great worldly resources; and the children of Israel served him eight years. Then "the children of Israel cried to Jehovah; and Jehovah raised up a saviour to the children of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of Jehovah was upon him, and he judged Israel; and he went out to war, and Jehovah gave Chushan-rishathaim king of Syria into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim. And the land had rest forty years" (*vv.* 9–11). That is the first judge, and he is a sort of type of the kind of thing that is sure to succeed—a man of spiritual resources, and these spiritual resources involve not only himself, but his wife; that is to say, Christ and the assembly are in view.

J.H.B. That is important in a day of recovery.

J.T. I do not think God will let us have any rest till we recognise the assembly. "The land had rest forty years." That is the principle running throughout the book. If we do not recognise the assembly we shall have trouble. Othniel secured Achsah and had his resources in the two kinds of springs; that is the whole position, I think.

LEARNING

GENESIS 47 : 7–10 ; 48 : 17–19 ; JOSHUA 14 : 6–15 ; JOHN 21 : 18, 19

I HAVE in mind, dear brethren, to speak about learning, which has to be distinguished from teaching, although they run together. I was thinking more of the learning that is acquired by experience with God, and the discipline that enters into it ; having also in mind that we may learn evilly as well as holily. Learning in the world takes on the former character ; what we call sophistication, worldly sophistication, without which the man of the world, in his reckoning and in the reckoning of the world, is at a great disadvantage. But it is to be judged and shunned by the believer ; for apart from self-judgment, we are capable of it and likely to seek it for ourselves, and especially for our children. This is one of the most fruitful sources of damage to the coming generation in any given time. People who would perhaps refuse the world for themselves, take it on, at least educationally, for their children. A certain education, of course, is necessary, but all godly, God-fearing, faithful parents will see to it that the wild gourds of the school are nullified by the meal in the house, in family nurture. There is no other way really of nullifying the evil of worldly influence on children, and so the more they are under the immediate influence of their parents, the safer. But then believers are themselves capable of learning evil ways ; ways indeed that may pass in a certain spiritual level, but which are discerned by the truly spiritual eye, for " the spiritual discerns all things," to be defiling. For instance, the apostle Paul writes to Timothy about certain who " learn also to be idle " (1 Tim. 5 : 13), which is a remarkable kind of education, and, as the apostle shows, an education that is

damaging. Not only do they learn to be idle, but in their idleness are " gossipers and meddlers," as he says. I stress that a little, dear brethren, as on the line of learning it is to be strenuously avoided as *damaging*. Communities marked by retired residents, as the world speaks, and as we speak, rightly, too, are exposed to this. Time is on people's hands, and this kind of learning proceeds; not only is there plenty of time on their hands, but they learn to use it unholily, going about and damaging by gossiping and meddling, as the apostle says. So that he enjoins wholesome occupation, and, above all, good works, for there is plenty to be done. So he says in Ephesians 2 : 10, " God has before prepared that we should walk (not in idleness but) in them," that is, good works. We are not to be behind in good works. They add greatly to the wealth of the saints, meeting also current need of various kinds amongst them.

And then the apostle also speaks in his second letter to Timothy (chap. 3 : 7) about persons who are " always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." That is another class. They are men more (the former are women), persons who are always apparently learning and never seem to be really formed of God, never to have arrived at the *knowledge of the truth*. A knowledge of the truth in 2 Timothy is to be specially noted as needed for protection. But there are those to whom he refers as " always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth "; a very common thing; one hesitates to say it, but it certainly should be faced, and there should be some evidence of progress in our souls, if we are sitting under ministry from God week by week. For the reckoning day is coming : " Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard " (Rev. 3 : 3). God pours out his rain bountifully, but there are the useful herbs we look for, meet for those by whom the land is dressed, so that obvi-

ously, dear brethren, there should be results from the gracious ministry from God showered upon us.

Well now, I wish to show from these four scriptures how this works out in as practical and simple a way as I can, so that the youngest may understand, and all may get help. Jacob is a fitting illustration of what I have in mind, in one phase of it, that is, the learning that comes from discipline, involving failure, from which indeed none of us can claim immunity. We should all in truth be ready to take our place alongside of Jacob. He is one among several of whom we have a life-size picture drawn by the Spirit of God, and what is to be noticed is that the soil for divine education is there from the beginning, an important matter for young ones here, brought up in believing households ; Timothy being an example in the New Testament of one who from a child knew the holy Scriptures. Having been brought up from a *child*, we can understand that it would be no difficulty for him to accept his place as one of Paul's children in the faith, as he began in his mother's house with the holy Scriptures, *knowing* them ; not that from a child he read them or committed them to memory, which is right too ; but that there was an element of knowledge in him from a child, there was excellent soil for divine sowing, that is to say, specially of the ministry of Paul, and that is the great finishing instruction, dear brethren ; it is the last course in divine instruction, Paul's ministry. There are courses ; and, as I said, the ministry of heavenly truth, the ministry of the assembly, which completes the word of God, is the last course.

And so Jacob, as I was saying, was from a child marked as of this kind of soil. " His hand took hold of Esau's heel " (Gen. 25 : 26), that is, he was a supplanter, which his name signifies. Not one who would supplant what was good, but what was evil or what was potentially so, as seen in Esau, a man

covered with red hair, an evidence of great *natural* energy, and a dangerous type. I need not enlarge on it ; every young person here will understand how it works out in his own experience, how he has to disallow in himself from the beginning this natural energy, which gives him a place in this world, as a cricketer, tennis player, swimmer, or the like, but which is most inimical to spiritual growth in the knowledge of God, and the younger we begin to set our faces against that the better ; the more we ensure spiritual headway in the school of God. Another thing about Jacob is that he valued, as we all know, the inheritance, and secured it. And then another thing is that he had good mothering. Whether it be in a physical or in a spiritual sense, nothing is more important than good mothering for the young. Rebecca has a place spiritually all her own. Sarah has, too. In fact, there are no duplicates at all in the line of faith. God is a God of variety. And although Rebecca came into Sarah's tent, she was not Sarah. She might learn from Sarah ; not that she could have learnt directly from her, but she could gather up something from her tent, and how she kept it. But as the Spirit of God gives us the account, we are shown that Rebecca mothered her son, she mothered Jacob, for she had spiritual discernment. She doubtless had watched his instincts, and without spiritual instincts there is little hope of any development in the school of God. Instincts in a way are greater than acquired knowledge ; they are ever true. And Rebecca undoubtedly discerned this. So much so, such a value did she attach to her son, that she says to him, " On me be thy curse, my son ! " Gen. 27 : 13. Jacob divined that that curse would be the outcome of his desire to get the blessing from Isaac, and he told his mother. She provided him with clothes, she did everything in her power to secure the blessing and not the curse for her son ; a

most important matter for a mother, for it would be either the one or the other, either the blessing or the curse. But she says, "Upon me be thy curse!" It is the spirit of Christ in the mother, ready to take on the curse for the sake of the son. What a lesson! Whether it be literal, actual mothers, or in the assembly, or the saints in a locality, we cannot do away with the responsibility towards our young. What can we expect from our young apart from example, the exhibition before their eyes of the spirit of Christ? Christ is not here personally; His spirit is to be manifested, reflected in the saints. He is to be known in the gates by the faithful wife, who is also the mother. And so she will take on the curse, she will do everything to secure the blessing, and she *secured* the blessing.

Now that brings us on to Jacob's middle life, as we speak, and it shows what advantages he had. You can see now what he was in his infancy and his youth; what instincts he had, what desires, and what mothering. There must be the mothering. It went so far as to his wife, too; for the wives of Esau were a continuous source of grief to this woman, this dear mother, Rebecca. I say so because of the spiritual concern she evinced in regard of her son, who in the mind of God was to occupy such a place in the testimony.

And so we arrive at his advanced years, and of course now we are thinking of the older brethren. A man of a hundred and thirty years is an old man, although he admits that he had not attained to the years of the life of his fathers. It is a very fine scene here, in the 47th chapter, one of the finest in the Old Testament, and one that every old brother and sister should aspire to. There is a clear acknowledgment of his whole history. It is a matter of *days*; days of years. In Jacob's mind there were no blank years, he recollected all; and if we have

been in any way with God we shall have no blanks in our minds. It is a mark of spirituality to be able to take a retrospective view of our lives, and it is a wholesome thing to do too, for whilst it brings out the shortcomings, it brings home, back to our happy memories, what God has been to us, " What the God that thou hast found ! " It reminds one of the retrospective view from Pisgah. There are two views : one into the land with all its fruitfulness and beauty, " that goodly mountain, and Lebanon," Deut. 3 : 25. Moses had that view, he was in it in his heart and he gets a view of it with his eyes ; and then there is also the retrospective view, looking back over and taking a survey of the way ; that is a wholesome view, too, it is to remind us of what God is to us in all our ways, crooked and straight. God remains God, beloved. It is well to learn to think of God as He is presented to us in the New Testament. We begin with Him who *is* ; what He is now. There are those who speak of what is in the past and forget the present ; and of the future and forget the present ; but surely *we* begin with the present, the *present* God, He who *is* ; He is the same God that *was* and that *will be*. So that on the top of Pisgah, as it were, it is the present God, what He *is*. It is like Romans 8. Would that everyone here would bathe his soul in Romans 8 ! It is a wonderful chapter ; it is the top of Pisgah. It is the present God. There is the land in all its glory, but there is the wilderness behind. The God who has been with us there, is the God of the present and of the future. Well, that fits in with what we have here. Jacob reviews his history. He speaks of " the days of the years," not the years simply, but the *days* of the years. If I speak of years, I may have in mind to enhance my place amongst the saints as an old person, but if I speak of the *days*, it is another matter, it is a question of experience, whether it be with God or

not. Jacob says his were "few and evil," a humble acknowledgment of what the previous history discloses; but then, beloved, there is every evidence that in all those days which he calls evil there had been a building up of something in his soul, and that is what I want all to get hold of. When Joseph brings his family into the presence of Pharaoh, he thinks perhaps, 'these brothers of mine are poor men and unlearned to go into the presence of Pharaoh.' So he selects five, which we can understand; it is a question of the best, for surely that is what is suitable to bring before the monarch, and he tutored them. But there is no consultation or tutoring in regard of Jacob; no, Jacob is the greatest man now, greater than Joseph, as I hope to show, and greater than Pharaoh. That is to say, beloved, we are honest with ourselves and with God, and make a full admission of the whole history, not pretending to be blank in regard of anything, of any day. There is no blank in Jacob's mind; he reviews the whole history, not only in years, but in days. But I say, look at the man! Have you heard a brother or a sister standing up and telling the whole truth? There is moral power in that person. It is a great moral triumph to be able to come forth and tell the whole truth. God knows it; and you may as well admit it too, but in doing so there is great moral power; it is a great moral victory. And so it is here. We are told that as Jacob went out he blessed Pharaoh. If the Holy Spirit records this for us, it is that He was pleased with the scene; certainly heaven was pleased with that scene. It is a great moral victory in a believer. One who tells the whole truth at the same time is greater than the monarch before him, for he blesses him. One would encourage anyone here to come forth honestly and with purpose of heart, for the Lord's sake, and for the sake of the brethren. Will it not be so, that there will be not only a moral

victory, but power for blessing ? What a victory it is to be a blessing where I have been a curse ! Do you think the language is too strong ? It is God's way. Jacob blesses the monarch, we are told, and goes out. What dignity ! The monarch does not dismiss him, as ordinarily. Jacob went out, it was *his* action.

Well now, look at him in the next chapter just briefly, dear brethren. We get to the zenith. It is as the sun goes down. In this case it goes down in its glory. I mean to say he is dying, but he is living. What could be greater to God than this glorious act of Jacob ! Not now a hundred and thirty years, but a hundred and forty-seven. I suppose those seventeen years were the best of his life ; they yielded more for God. We hear of nothing derogatory in those seventeen years ; much better than the fifteen years of Hezekiah. Those seventeen years are years of refinement, beloved. I believe we have arrived at the time of refinement in the history of the assembly, and it should be so with every brother and sister as we advance in years, that there is maturity with refinement for God.

Now Jacob crosses his hands and puts Ephraim before Manasseh ; a wonderful evidence of spiritual intelligence, that is to say, intelligence acquired by learning. I am not speaking of teaching, but *learning* ; in a man who had observed, who had learnt in his circumstances. Joseph says, " Not so, my father, for this is the first-born." What words had more authority (other than Pharaoh's) than those of Joseph ? Those words could command every ear in Egypt, but not Jacob's. It is the greatness of the man, beloved, through learning. There is faith, of course, as the Spirit of God comments on it, " By faith Jacob when dying blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshipped on the top of his staff," Heb. 11 : 21. And so Jacob refused and said, " I

know, my son, I know." How great a thing for the dear brethren as we get old to be able to say this. Our vision is apt to grow dim; we are apt to let things go, but it should not be so. An old brother or sister has something the young have not; it should be available for God, but it will not be available unless we are learning. Jacob saw all things clearly. How important that is, for matters come up and if I am not clear in my vision I may take the wrong side, and the very weight of my experience comes in on that side. How serious that is! Jacob refused and said, "I know, my son, I know." How often a father or mother has been diverted by the influence of a son or daughter, by the natural. Let us learn to refuse, dear brethren, and say with Jacob, "I know, my son, I know."

Well now, briefly to touch on Caleb. I only wanted to bring forward the side of purpose; appreciation of what God in His love provides, and *determination to have it*, but with that determination not mere fleshly energy, but moral suitability. And so Caleb says to Joshua, "Thou knowest the word that Jehovah spoke to Moses the man of God, concerning me and thee." How many years back? Forty-five years! How happily that occasion was retained in that dear man's mind! It is not simply, Moses who commanded Israel, but "the *man of God*," and forty-five years before! This is another thing; it is not now "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life," not a word about the evil. Here is a man who can say, "Jehovah has kept me alive." What a triumph! What a sense of dependence! All the vicissitudes of the forty-five years had passed, and now he says, "as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in." It is, beloved, the grasping of the purpose of love, the purpose of God for us, and the determination to have it; and the spirit and manner and way

in all those forty-five years are in keeping with that hope, for surely if we think of the inheritance, of the coming of the Lord, and all that is in prospect for us, there should be some becoming feature manifested in us. It is a poor thing to talk about the inheritance, of the coming of the Lord, and to be worldly, to have worldly ambitions ; the one belies the other.

If I look back forty-five years, what is my recollection ? Is it what Moses, the servant, the man of God, said ; what someone who represents God, spoke of to me and to somebody else ? It is a question of two at that time, the other ten went astray ; the one was now the leader of God's people, and the other represents one who gives character to be strong, for that is how Caleb stands in Joshua and Judges, a man who by his power gives character to the whole tribe. And so it is that the children of Judah come near to Joshua in *Gilgal*, for it is a spiritual setting, and then Caleb speaks, so that as we go on these lines we are insensibly representative of our tribes and we influence them. This passage and the next chapter, and the early part of Judges prove conclusively that Caleb and his family were the characterising feature of Judah at this juncture. And so we are told that " the land rested from war." It is by the great influence of a man like Caleb that war ceases.

Well now, finally, I want to show in Peter the idea of the end, the Lord Himself telling him what would mark him at the end. One has to have an eye to the end, and Peter in the New Testament occupies pretty much the same position as Jacob does in the Old, particularly in John ; there is a peculiar touch in Peter as John introduces him to us. It is what he was to be called : " thou shalt be called Cephas," the Lord says to him. Now what do you think about that, young man, young brother ? What are you going to be called ? As Peter comes to the Lord, the

Lord looks at him. One can see how the Lord is taking account of what is developing in that young man. We get nothing in John to correspond with what we get in Matthew about him, but we get this beautiful start, "thou shalt be called Cephas." "Thou shalt be *called*"; I do not want to miss that; I do not want to be called anything that the Lord has not had in His mind for me. Whatever He has in His mind for me, I want to be called that, whether now or by-and-by. And what Peter was to be called implied that he was to be material for building. Who can be material for building, who has not got love? You cannot be material for building if you have not love; it is by love we build. It is persons who love who are built in. You do not want to be called anything else but a lover, a lover of Christ, of God, of the brethren, and one whom God loves, and Christ loves, and the brethren love, so that when you come into the meeting, how the brethren are glad to see you come in. "The disciples rejoiced therefore, having seen the Lord." One should reflect that in some way.

And then in chapter 6, that long chapter so full of holy matter about eternal life, Peter is a *learner*. The Lord is not directly speaking to Peter; He is speaking mostly to the crowds, but Peter is listening, that is to say, he represents the learner. He *is* learning. Others are exposed in that chapter; Philip and Andrew show up poorly in regard to the feeding of the multitude; but at the end of the chapter when the Lord asks "Will ye also go away?" Peter says, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast words of life eternal; and we have believed and known that thou art the holy one of God." In those days in Galilee, in Capernaum, how his ears were opened! It is not that he was especially in view, he was one among others, among the twelve but among others as well. He was *listening*. Whether

the word be to you directly or not, get the benefit, be a learner, that is the principle. And so, you see, Peter learnt not only that He was the Christ, the Holy One of God, but that here was One who could speak of eternal life in all its features, and who not only could say things about it, but who *had* the words ; he could come to Jesus, and the words would be *there*, He *has* them ; Peter learnt that. He had learnt that He was the Holy One of God. It does not say here, as in Matthew, that it was revealed to him of the Father ; in Matthew it is a question of revelation, but here it is a question of learning. And then the final word in the verses read, " When thou wast young," the Lord now is going back to his young days. Can we bear the light of the Lord on our youthful days ? They will all have to pass before Him by-and-by, all will be manifested, the days and years, before the judgment-seat of Christ. But now it is " When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst where thou desiredst " ; that was Peter's youthful days. We do well to reflect on our youth, as to what our youthful days may appear by-and-by, for the Lord will bring them up ; " but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and bring thee where thou dost not desire." Now you see what a changed Peter, and how through learning he had learnt the principle of resignation to the will of God. What a lesson, dear brethren ! " Stretch forth thy hands " is really resignation to the will of God ; " another shall gird thee, and bring thee where thou dost not desire " : he is entirely submissive to the will of God. How pleasing to God that is ! He had not then yet come to die, not yet come to his old age, but his second letter written plainly testifies to the old Peter, that he was ready to put off his tabernacle, he was ready to do it, " as also our Lord Jesus Christ has manifested to me." How he remem-

bered this; all those years of toil and suffering intervening only built up the preciousness of those words which Jesus said about him, what he should be in his old age. He did not miss it; he justifies the Lord's words. How he could speak of the transfiguration, happening anterior to this, as he says, "having been eye-witnesses of his majesty . . . being with him on the holy mountain." How fitting that is on the lips of an old man about to put off his tabernacle! What an example for us who are older, to be wholly conformed to the divine forecast. We learn it, you know, in secret with the Lord. He does not leave us in the dark as to what we are to be called and to what He looks for right through to the end, for it adds, "But he said this signifying by what death he should glorify God." What could be greater than that, than that the end should be as the whole life, a sacrifice to God!

May God bless these thoughts to us. I believe they are applicable to us to-day.

MINISTRY BEARING ON OUR STATE

JOHN 6 : 26–71

J.T. This chapter furnishes an example of how ministry comes in relation to the state of the persons ministered to. The verses read take the form of a conversation, the Lord meeting either the attitude of the crowd, or their remarks ; so that a reading such as this usually resolves itself into a word meeting the state, which may not be known to all, but the Lord knows and will bring out the state that is current. " When therefore the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they got into the ships, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus," and the Lord says, " Verily, verily, I say to you, Ye seek me not because ye have seen signs, but because ye have eaten of the loaves and been filled."

The crowd is over against the disciples, but then there is certain importance to be attached to the crowd in this chapter. The Lord takes account of it in verse 5, " Whence shall we buy loaves that these may eat ? " It was sufficiently important to give to them so that they might eat ; now they are brought to the point where they could eat in a spiritual sense and they would be tested as to whether there was anything in them spiritually ; the chapter shows that at the moment there was very little there.

Ques. Would the provision of the five barley loaves prepare a state for what follows in the section ?

J.T. I think that is the setting, the size and quality of the food ; it will lead to the spiritual.

The crowd wanted to know how He had arrived at the other side. The Lord does not answer us according to our questions, but according to our state ; He is not going to satisfy their curiosity as to how He had arrived there ; He deals with their state, " Ye seek

me not because ye have seen the signs, but because ye have eaten of the loaves and been filled. Work not for the food which perishes, but for the food which abides unto life eternal." They did not see the spiritual thought. The sign was to lead to this result in the crowd seeking the Lord, that He might speak to them about the spiritual. He wants to direct them to what is spiritual. The signs are all to direct us to what is spiritual. It is important to note that they crossed the sea to find Him and they found Him, they were in earnest about it. It shows how far men may go in a natural way, because the Lord shows plainly that was what was moving them. It answers to what is abroad in Christendom ; there is enquiry about Him, people go a long way ; but the Lord deals with the soul, what is going on inwardly. I think that is what we find to-day ; it is an inward state, and ministry is to meet that.

Ques. Would believing on Him be the inward work ; the Lord says the work of God is to " believe on him whom he has sent " ?

J.T. That is what we begin with. This " Verily, verily " brings in something definite, " Ye seek me, not because ye have seen the signs." Then in verse 32 you again have " Verily, verily," which deals with the true bread. There is a " Verily, verily," dealing with our souls, then another dealing with what is positively presented to us.

The definiteness of " Verily, verily " marks John's ministry ; you get it nowhere else, so far as I know. It applies peculiarly now, because of the want of definiteness there is ; people are very indefinite and shallow. John's ministry is to work down to the roots of things, to get at our state, and the need for the work of God. The work of God has a great place in John ; here it is to " believe on him whom *he* has sent." They had said, " What should we do that we may work the works of God ? " That is what was

going on in their minds. Every question here is ordered of God so that the answers may be clear, so that we may see what they refer to.

Ques. Why does it mention that the passover was drawing near (*v.* 4) ?

J.T. It means, I think, that whilst current religious customs were proceeding, the Lord was not interfering with them ; He was not really in them at all ; He was pursuing another line. He takes up the new position of Galilee here and His disciples are with Him. The "disciple" belongs to this chapter over against chapter 5, in which the disciple does not appear. It is a question of disciples here.

Ques. Will you distinguish between the movement of the disciples preceding the Lord crossing the water, and that of those who follow ?

J.T. It is an important comparison. The Lord "departed again to the mountain himself alone" ; and "when evening was come his disciples went down to the sea, and, having gone on board ship, they went over the sea to Capernaum" ; then the Lord joins them. That is their position, and they receive Him into the boat. "On the morrow the crowd which stood on the other side of the sea . . . got into the ships, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And having found him . . . they said . . . Rabbi, when art thou arrived here ?" The crowd were not in the position of knowing, whereas the disciples knew something about the movements of the Lord. It is the crossing over the sea here ; that is what the enquiry of the crowd refers to, How did He come here ?

Ques. Could you say some more as to the barley loaves ?

J.T. You have to take the loaves and the fishes. The sheaf of firstfruits of barley, according to Leviticus, is Christ ; but I think the barley here would be more the kind of material ; we minimise the value of it. It is important to notice here the

enquiry of the crowd. The disciples had additional signs which the crowd did not get. There are things that are public, but the disciples get additional things. They had the light of Christ walking on the sea and coming into the ship. It is full of instruction, and the crowd are all in the dark about it; but it is to their credit that they want to know how the Lord got there; but He does not enlighten them; what He deals with is the state of their souls.

Then they enquire what they should do to work the works of God. Moses gave them the manna in the wilderness. Then in verse 41, "The Jews therefore murmured about him, because he said, *I* am the bread which has come down out of heaven." Then again in verse 52, "The Jews therefore contended among themselves, saying, How can *he* give us this flesh to eat?" And verse 60, "Many therefore of his disciples having heard it said, This word is hard; who can hear it?" Then there is a murmuring in verse 61; these are the things that bring out where they are, and the Lord's remarks deal with these things, at the same time unfolding most wonderful things positively as to food and what it is in view of, eternal life. This chapter helps us in that it discloses what is in our hearts, where we are and how the Lord meets it. So that conversational services are highly supported in Scripture, that is what we get here.

Rem. True ministry would discover what is in our hearts and at the same time give us that which would meet it.

J.T. That is the idea exactly. It may go much farther, you may get much beyond that in a meeting, but the Lord would always meet the state of soul.

What comes out in this section is the economy in which we are set. Moses represents an economy; but the economy here is that of the Father and the Son, the sent One. The Spirit is brought in later. The economy in this chapter is set in that connection,

the Father and the Son. "Work not for the food which perishes, but for the food which abides unto life eternal, which the Son of man shall give to you; for him has the Father sealed, even God." Then in verse 32, "Verily, verily, I say to you, It is not Moses that has given you the bread out of heaven; but my Father gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world." That is the position; it is the Father and the Son, the Father giving the bread, and the Son coming down that it might be here. So that the work of God is to believe on Him whom He has sent. The work of God is seen in faith in the One who sent Jesus. It is not the works of God here, it is the work.

Ques. To what does the sealing refer, "For him has the Father sealed, even God"? Does it refer to His baptism?

J.T. I think so; the Holy Spirit coming on Him, that is where the economy began.

Ques. Is the bread of heaven for satisfaction?

J.T. Yes, and what it leads to. It is the economy in time, it is the economy for eternity; the last day is mentioned five or six times; it is an economy in time leading to something. There is nothing outside this economy, which is a great thing to get into the soul. "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand," John 3 : 35.

Ques. What is meant by believing on Him?

J.T. Do you mean verse 29? That is a good question. It will probably take you all your life to get an answer to it. I do not think anyone has an answer; it is a matter for the soul, believing "on him whom *he* has sent." It is not 'believing on Me.' But this is the economy, the sent One here to carry out the Father's thoughts. There are very few such believers. "His disciples believed on him" (John 2 : 11), meaning they had believed before. Perhaps

you think I have not enlightened you very much, but if what I have said turns you to this gospel in prayer, you will never forget it. There is a moral thought in the sent One; it is not a mere historical thought. To believe that Jesus was born at a certain time, and that He died, that is historical; that is not the point at all. It is a question of the moral movement, apprehending His being sent, "him whom he has sent," such a One as that.

Ques. What is the idea of the revelation given to Peter?

J.T. That, of course, gave Peter a great advantage, but the moral element was not in that; the moral element is rather seen in Peter's remark at the end of this chapter, "Thou hast words of life eternal; and we have believed and known that thou art the holy one of God." There is a man who has the idea of believing on Him whom He hath sent. It is characteristic.

P.L. Peter answered; others murmured. The Person is believed upon.

J.T. Well, there is the work of God. If you look around for evidence of the work of God, Peter is it.

Ques. Is this living bread to build up spiritual constitution?

J.T. It is indeed; it is a constitution that begins with this moral idea, believing on the sent One, there is a moral element in that which is the foundation.

Ques. Is the full thought reached in chapter 9?

J.T. Well, quite; the Son of God.

Ques. Does Christ come before the soul as bringing in life in another world and another realm?

J.T. Very good; it leads into another order of things, and the man undoubtedly came into it, in a way. The point was to go to "Siloam, which is interpreted Sent." I think the moral element was in that man more than in any in the gospel, therefore

it is the " works of God " in him ; this chapter is really leading up to that, and Peter represents the result. I do not believe we ever reach a point where we have finished.

Rem. There should be some result from this meeting.

J.T. Every meeting should add something to us.

Rem. You spoke of conversational meetings. Is that the idea of a reading meeting ?

Rem. " Teaching and admonishing one another," Col. 3 : 16.

J.T. Paul's conversation with the brethren at Troas after Eutychus was resuscitated provides conditions for a reading meeting ; it is conversation and communication. " The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life " (*v.* 63) ; that is far more than the mere eating of the loaves.

Ques. Is this to prepare the way for receiving Him, in contrast to " He came to his own, and his own received him not " ?

J.T. Quite so. There is the receiving of Him here, and appropriation in a most solemn way.

Ques. Referring again to the blind man, he went and washed in the pool of Siloam and " came seeing " ; did he believe on the sent One ?

J.T. He would not have told you so ; he just says to the neighbours what he knows, he does not go beyond that. He acts according to his measure, and John throughout is to show that whilst we are here it is progressive, constant increase of light in the apprehension of Christ, you can never consider it finished.

Rem. " I suppose that not even the world itself would contain the books written " (John 21 : 25), he does not assume to have reached finality.

J.T. It is infinite. The idea of faith runs right through until the very last moment you are on earth. There are always fresh glories of Christ, always

something to believe. "And his disciples believed on him" (John 2:11); "these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in his name," John 20:31.

Ques. Is believing on Him, and appropriating Him in His death, in contrast to merely seeing the light?

J.T. It leads up to that, the words "eating and drinking" are simply to convey the idea of appropriation. Eating goes further than the mouth, it includes the whole system, so that there should be assimilation. It is a very strong figure the Lord uses, and it has to be understood spiritually.

Ques. Is working "the works of God," the work of God in the soul?

J.T. It is the work of God in the soul; believing is the evidence of it.

Rem. The appropriation that follows would be the outcome of this.

J.T. Believing "on him whom he has sent" is the moral element, and that is the foundation. You get the idea of "sent," and then the Father gives the bread that came down out of heaven; He came down that He might be here, "the bread of God is he that comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world. They said, therefore to Him, Lord, ever give to us this bread." It is very much like the woman in chapter 4, "Give me this water that I may not thirst."

The Lord goes on to say, "I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believes on me shall never thirst at any time." Wonderful word that! John contemplates the work of God so that we come, we move toward Christ and believe on Him. Again He says, "Ye have also seen me and do not believe." Then it says, "No one can come to me except the Father who has sent me draw him, and *I* will raise him up in the last day. It is

written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every one that has heard from the Father himself, and has learned of him, comes to me ; not that anyone has seen the Father, except he who is of God, *he* has seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say to you, He that believes on me has life eternal. *I* am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. *I* am the living bread which has come down out of heaven : if anyone shall have eaten of this bread he shall live for ever ; but the bread withal which *I* shall give is my flesh, which *I* will give for the life of the world " (*vv.* 44–51). It is well to compare this with the Lord's remarks as to His body in the instruction about the Supper in Matthew and in Mark ; here it is His flesh, there it is His body. Here it is a question of the believer coming into life, eternal life ; there it is in view of the believer coming into the assembly, that is the idea of the body, it is the whole thought ; Christ's body is the full thought ; so is the assembly.

P.L. Feeding in this chapter would take us out of the world ; feeding on His body would set us up in the vessel of testimony in this world.

J.T. It would give you strength to go to the mount of Olives.

Rem. It is not living in nature. You appropriate His death in regard of the natural.

J.T. The Lord's supper is in view of what is collective. This chapter (John 6) is intensely individual ; one has to eat himself, it is " *he* that eats " ; the other is collective, there they eat together.

Rem. There is sustenance and satisfaction in the economy.

J.T. It is the kind of food that leads you out of natural conditions towards the death of Christ ; it is a dead Christ. We live by Him. The blood is

separated from the body. We read this chapter, but then we do not take in the idea of a dead Christ ; a most solemn thing ; it means I come to that myself, that is the idea, that I have come to the separation of the blood from the body, the flesh ; believing thus, to take up another condition in which there is another order, blood and flesh no more ; the new condition in flesh.

P.L. So that in the crossing of the Jordan there is no suggestion that they crossed tribally, as they were set, there was no use for the tabernacle, it was the ark alone ; is that suggestive that Israel crossed over individually and spiritually ?

J.T. The tribal principle is in view, but it is only to maintain unity as you go over ; the stones set up in Gilgal is a tribal setting but it is unity in life. This chapter leads to that, unity in life. I think the crossing of Jordan is more properly in regard of the land, in Colossians, and there you have the collective thought. It has in view that we are in the land, in unity of affection, unity of life. This is each one going over, each one eats for himself and drinks for himself ; I am not legal in the thing, I am taking on this, the flesh is truly food and the blood is truly drink, and one never thirsts again. It has a satisfying side to it in the blood. It is the acceptance of the end of the flesh and blood condition ; if it is ended in Christ it means I cannot go on in it, I must accept the end of it.

It may be said we still live in flesh and blood, but that is not the point here, the point here is life, entering into life. If I want to enter into eternal life, I have to accept the ending of the flesh and blood condition, that is by the Spirit ; I cannot realise it apart from the Spirit ; it is an abstraction, but I can only be in it in power by the Spirit.

This chapter certainly involves what has gone before. It touches on the old corn of the land, but

His flesh and His blood is not the old corn of the land.

" I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." That gives the clue to verse 63, " the words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." The disciples get something that the crowd does not get. " The last day " is finality ; it is the end, nothing can happen after that. " I will raise him up," we die in the meantime ; the Lord says it five or six times ; it is the great point of the chapter. The formative work goes on while we are in the body. When we are raised all that will come into display. The raising up refers to the body. The point is the state of flesh and blood ended ; another state called eternal life is entered on ; that is the thing to find out. It is most profound. This chapter is a good basis for a Bible reading like this. The question is, what have we got out of it ? You would like to carry the brethren with you in what you believe.

Rem. The food is presented in two ways. He speaks of the bread of life and " he that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believes on me shall never thirst at any time," and then He speaks of eating and drinking that they might have eternal life.

J.T. The first is provisional hunger ; He would deliver you from hunger and thirst, but that would be merely negative ; eternal life brings you into something wonderful, it is an out-of-the-world condition of things into which I enter by learning in my soul that flesh and blood is terminated judicially ; He came down ; He presents it in this way to make it good in my soul, that I eat the flesh and drink the blood separately ; " the words I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life " ; it is not the continuance of human life ; it is another life ; but then this one must be terminated for the glory of God ; I appropriate that. The word ' eating ' and ' drinking ' is appro-

priation, it becomes food in one's soul, so that I pass into the other thing in power. I come to the end of flesh and blood condition. 'The word is hard,' you may truly say, but faith understands. The economy runs right through. The Father draws to the Son, and the Son teaches. God teaches us. All that enters into it. Three divine Persons are engaged in it, so that you might come into this great thing that God has in His mind for you; that is, eternal life.

Peter does not go so far as the full thought of the chapter; he just says, "Thou hast words of life eternal," as if to say, If I want to learn this chapter I have got to go to that Person. We come into eternal life now, but it will be seen in the millennium. The great result is spiritual, we enter into it now. "And this is the witness, that God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son," 1 John 5 : 11.

P.L. Chapter 7 is the subject of testimony, "rivers of living water."

J.T. Just so, one chapter leads on to another. One little crumb of spirit and life goes a long way in a reading meeting.

PROPHECY IN VIEW OF LIFE AND UNITY

Ezekiel 37

J.T. A word about life and its relation to unity may help us; so that the thought is not to take up the chapter prophetically, but in its present bearing. One thing that helps in the chapter is the place that prophecy has in relation to life and unity, while the life is developing; the mind of God is brought in constantly. The divine element therefore enters into our beings in the form of life. At the outset, in Adam for instance, there was nothing of this kind, no idea of the mind of God being pressed in on Adam. He was formed, as you might say, immediately by an act of God, but the forming here is in relation to the mind of God forced in, in the power of gift and the prophetic word.

Ques. Must there be death before life?

J.T. Well, that is true. The suggestion, of course, is a wide one, and the question is, which death do you mean? The life that God purposed is a life out of death. Even before sin came into the world, God established that principle of life out of death.

P.L. John peculiarly treats of life. Does he bring in the prophetic element in relation to the word to the seven churches as accompanying that? You referred to the mind of God accompanying His activities in life. John speaks of the breathing in chapter 20, and then throughout Revelation is the mind of God involved prophetically?

J.T. Well, the presence of life in Revelation corresponds very much with Ezekiel, but we should have to go to John's gospel to get the direct teaching as to life, but whether it be here or in Revelation or in John's gospel, the principle of the mind of God being forced in in the power of gift and the power of the Spirit is apparent. So that what is brought into

life is in that way, in the very fibre of it, possessed of the mind of God, the moral element.

Ques. Does Peter refer to it when he says that we are " born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the living and abiding word of God," 1 Pet. 1 : 23 ?

J.T. Very good ; I think that helps. That is the seed really, but the idea of prophecy is more than the word. It is the mind of God brought in forcefully, and the bearing of it is the scene around us, so that the development is immune from the influence of the scene around. It is not simply something done by a divine act apart from the mind of God, as for instance, " He spoke, and it was done ; he commanded, and it stood fast," Psa. 33 : 9. There is no idea of the mind being in the development subjectively forced into it, nor is there in Adam's case, but in view of the conditions with which we have to do as made to live, the idea of the prophetic element must come in, so that we have a life immune from the conditions around and in relation to a coming world. That is, it is a life in view of another world, and pertaining to another world, but capable of going through this world immune from its influences. " Whoever has been begotten of God does not practise sin, because his seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God," 1 John 3 : 9. I cite that as supporting the thought.

P.L. In the identification so intimately of Elisha with the child whom he raised, " his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and bent over him " (2 Kings 4 : 34), is there the implanting of the prophetic word accompanying the power of life ?

J.T. That helps because the idea was that the child brought into life would be in relation to the prophetic eyes and the prophetic mouth.

Ques. Is the prophetic word brought in sovereignly

on the part of the individual who expresses the prophecy ?

J.T. We have to consider the person who expresses it. Much place is given to Ezekiel in the book. What a man he was, so that he is qualified to serve in this way ; he would himself have been formed so as to stand against the current evil of the world around him, and it is said here, " The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and Jehovah carried me out in the Spirit, and set me down in the midst of a valley ; and it was full of bones. And he caused me to pass by them round about ; and behold, there were very many in the open valley ; and behold, they were very dry." God is operating in relation to His servant ; He is bringing him into what He is doing, so that he will be capable of understanding the result. Being with God, he goes round about and he is able to pass a judgment : " they were very dry." So that he is intelligent in what is being done, and then he is questioned, " Shall these bones live ? " " And he said unto me, Prophesy over these bones, and say unto them, Ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto these bones : Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will put sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live : and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. And I prophesied as I was commanded." So that the mind of God is brought in in power. The dry bones are addressed ; we have to dismiss the literal and understand that it is a figure. The literal, of course, is involved, but it is a figure. Dry bones refer to persons with ears to hear, and the mind of God is brought in upon them.

F.W. Do they represent the divine structure upon which God operates ?

J.T. I think so ; do you mean the structure of the body ?

F.W. Yes. I thought perhaps there was some place where God starts with us, something that He can breathe into. He does not breathe into the old order, does He ?

J.T. No ; it is a completely new formation, so that I think the bones refer to the identity, that there is a complete change. They also enter into literal death and resurrection, and as with the bones of Joseph, they represent the identity.

F.W. They were very dry, indicating, I suppose, that all the past order had passed away.

J.T. That is the idea ; there is no divine seed there.

F.W. But the identity goes through in the bones.

Ques. Would Nicodemus be a subject in that way ?

J.T. If you go back to chapter 36, he fits in there. We are further on than John 3, than new birth. Still that chapter helps, so that what the Lord is propounding to Nicodemus is not simply something formed out of an inanimate thing ; it is dead persons made to live. Bones represent the identity of the person in responsibility ; he can be addressed, and he is addressed here. All that has to be done ; it is a completely new man, and yet the identity remains.

F.W. I suppose the principle of recovery underlies this, because the old order is not exactly recovered, although the identity is there.

J.T. That is what I was thinking. You have nothing but very dry bones. That is the figure, but those bones, taken as representing persons, involve that there is responsibility. They are addressed, but they are very dry. There is nothing there from the divine side ; all has to be done, and so you get, " Ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto these bones : Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live." That is, you have bones, sinews, flesh and skin, and

then breath. The breath is mentioned first, but it comes in in its order at the end. I am afraid that in dealing with the subject of life we take it up too much apart from this moral element, and the result is not satisfactory; the moral element is absent.

F.W. What do you mean by that?

J.T. The element that judges according to God is absent. In Ephesians we have the life of God; natural men were "estranged from the life of God" (chap. 4 : 18), that is, it involves what God is in a moral sense, seen here in relation to what is here, whether in Christ or in us.

F.W. They are dead, in other words.

J.T. Yes; it is an exotic in principle, but with elements capable of judging what is there and resisting their influence. It is a subjective state brought about by this process.

R.B. Do you connect the moral element with the prophetic word?

J.T. Yes, the mind of God forced in in power.

R.B. Would you say just what you mean by "forced in"?

J.T. Prophecy is power in the way it is treated in Scripture. If you take it as a gift, it is the next after the apostolic gift. Apostolic ministry is authoritative, but prophetic ministry is moral; it forces the mind of God into the being. Being prophecy it deals with what is here, but it is the mind of God come in in a forceful way.

R.B. Then is your thought that the prophet is connected with the work of God and the other details allude to what the prophetic word secures?

J.T. Just so; even the breath is prophesied to here. "And he said unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that

they may live. And I prophesied as he had commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet."

A.M. Is the thought that as the life develops the mind of God is going on constantly hidden, but in view of producing a corresponding answer in us to what is in the mind of God ?

J.T. I think that is right. The prophesying continuing all through implies development. They stand on their feet. When a man stands on his feet now, what is he like ? Is he just a forgiven man, or is he a man according to God, " the new man, which *according to God* is created in truthful righteousness and holiness," Eph. 4 : 24 ? The others, it is said in that same chapter are " estranged from the life of God by reason of the ignorance that is in them " (*v.* 18), and I think that the weakness very largely with us all is in the moral state that emanates in connection with righteousness, for that is where the basis is laid in the soul, where the judgment has been met in the death of Christ. That is the foundation of the moral structure, but then, there is the mind of God brought in as well in a prophetic way. All these elements come under it, the sinews, and the flesh and the skin, and they are all affected by it ; every fibre in your being is affected by the mind of God forced in in this way upon you, so that you begin to feel that you cannot be otherwise, you must be this.

Ques. Is the forcing that you have referred to necessary on account of opposition ?

J.T. Of course, Romans helps us. The flesh is militant against all this, but I think it comes in with a measure of moral authority.

Ques. Is that seen in the scripture here, " Prophesy over these bones " ? Does that suggest the superiority of the prophesying ?

J.T. I think so. These bones are the object of it, and this forceful kind of ministry is to affect them,

and thus every fibre so to say comes under the effect of the prophecy.

Ques. Have we the moral side in the verse, " But he that practises the truth comes to the light, that his works may be manifested that they have been wrought in God," John 3 : 21 ?

J.T. That is very good, and then, " If ye know that he is righteous, know that every one who practises righteousness is begotten of him," 1 John 2 : 29. It is the moral element with us individually, not only in the presentation of righteousness in the death of Christ which is the foundation, but this prophesying ; forcing in, as I said, of the mind of God as the development proceeds, and then the breath coming in finally ; the breath itself having been prophesied to. As it says in verse 9, " Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah : Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain." The idea of the four winds is a striking symbol as suggestive of power, as the breathing from heaven when the Holy Spirit came down. So that there is divine power on every side here in the development of life. It is not like the breath breathed by God into Adam's nostrils, nor by the Lord into the disciples. It is the four winds ; it is a matter of power.

G.C.S. Is that seen in Acts 19 : 20, where it says that " the word of the Lord increased " ? That would be in souls, would it not ?

J.T. That is so. The idea of all this appears at Pentecost where there was a " violent impetuous blowing," Acts 2 : 2. That remains all through the dispensation, and this illustrates it, how life in the believer is developed in relation to the mind of God brought in, not simply casually, or in Bible reading or speaking, but in power. The prophecy is imperative in regard of the matter in hand.

F.W. Do you think Moses in Numbers 21 was a

forceful prophet in the bringing in of life ? There was no other alternative, was there ?

J.T. That is good. It is suggestive too because it comes in under the direction of the lawgiver. It is the same idea. The princes dug the well, which involves spiritual power, but it was " at the word of the lawgiver." It is not the symbol of wind there but water.

P.W. If they did not look they did not live ; that was the long and short of it.

J.T. Quite so. The idea of the wind as a symbol of the Spirit refers to the upper part of the being, the intelligent side, and that is what is in view here, the intelligent side of a man as made to live, and so he is according to the mind of God ; he is like God in this world.

W.B.T. Would all this be in view in 1 Corinthians ? The apostle presses prophecy in chapter 14 with a view to living conditions.

J.T. I had in mind the place that prophecy has in the New Testament. It is the one thing to be desired above others : " Rather that ye may prophesy," 1 Cor. 14 : 1.

Ques. Would the sinews come in in relation to tribulation ?

J.T. Why do you ask that question ?

Rem. I was thinking of the strength of the person being developed, and the prophetic word coming in to bring in the mind of God in the tribulation in Romans 5.

J.T. That is very good : " Tribulation works endurance." So that the inner fibre is developed, not only in intelligence but in strength. Sinews, flesh and skin ; these are what are in view here.

P.L. So in the end of Mark do they stand up on their feet in the power of life ? The Lord is presented peculiarly in His prophetic ministry in Mark's gospel, and there is fibre with them, power to resist, taking

up serpents and drinking any deadly thing and no injury. Would that go with this ?

J.T. I think that is right ; there is something there that is according to God.

R.B. From what you are saying, is there power in the prophetic gift to effect this ? Is that the object for which the prophetic gift is given ?

J.T. I think it had that place. After authority in the apostle, the next gift is prophecy, and it comes in peculiarly as from God. It is a gift that comes to the conscience and appeals to us as from God, His claim in a moral sense, so that the development reflects what God is, " the life of God."

P.L. Would Paul thus serve prophetically when he says, " So that death works in us, but life in you," 2 Cor. 4 : 12 ? Would that be life implanted through the prophetic word ?

J.T. I suppose death working in him would mean in his prayers for them, and all his anxiety about them. The unity of the Spirit would be life for them. It is an allusion to the subtle kind of way in which the whole of Christianity is developed, so that any excess of self-judgment or bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus in you helps the whole assembly. I think it is to bring in the universal bearing of anything that goes on in any one of us ; it bears on all.

L.D.M. Is that the suggestion in the bones coming together ?

J.T. I suppose the bones coming together is what underlies the man ; as was remarked, it is the structure, unless the bones come together properly you will have malformation, so it is a very important thing that they should come together. You feel how dependent upon God you are at the very outset. If this is to be taken as a symbol of any one of us as God addresses us at the outset, it is most important that the fundamental things should be correct, that

the structure should be right, otherwise there will be malformation. I think God's thought is that there should not be malformation but that man should stand up, especially as Christ did here. The Man Christ Jesus stood up in the perfection of Manhood under God's eye.

G.C.S. Would the flesh be what is seen, and if the bones are wrong what is represented of God before men will be wrong ?

J.T. The skin is what is seen, that is to say, the complexion, the external effect of life. The beautification is on the skin, and that is no small part of the form of a man. The beautification that God puts on a human being is no small part. There is the framework, and the sinews, that is the strength ; and the flesh which is the filling out, the lines, forming the grace that marks the person ; and the skin that on which God can work out beautification. We have the idea in the Canticles in both speakers. It is a very important part ; so we must have the skin ; a healthy skin is important or we shall have poor complexions. The growth of hair is important, whether in the man or the woman ; it is ornamental. You get it in figure in Psalm 133 : 2, " that ran down upon the beard." All these things allude to ornamentation that God puts upon man, for the idea is not simply that there should be a beautiful framework but beautiful lines, as described in Canticles, a beautiful skin on which all the ornamentation is seen. God is filling His universe with beautiful beings all after Christ.

Ques. Is it seen in David as having a beautiful complexion ?

J.T. Exactly ; that is what marked him. " He was ruddy, and beautiful-eyed," 1 Sam. 16 : 12.

H.W.S. Are you viewing this as the prophetic word acting upon us individually to bring us into correspondence with Christ and one another ?

J.T. That is the thought. Unity is in view, as you notice in the end of the chapter, but unity of beautiful persons, beautiful structure, beautiful lines and countenances and then the breath in power, because it is not the breathing of God here. It is a powerful thing, the four winds supplying the symbol of power. It is all the power there is represented in the element of wind. The Lord says, "The wind blows where it will"; He uses it in that sense.

Ques. Is the thought of unity worked out in the bones coming together?

J.T. No; the thought of unity is in the two sticks in the second part of the chapter; you must have the two sticks for unity. It is this great thought of life developing, and it is seen in Judah and the children of Israel, his companions, and then in Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions. The expressions are very finely rendered in the names of the two sticks, Judah and Ephraim, and they become one in the hand of the prophet, that is typically in the hand of Christ. This great result in life is to be in the hand of Christ. It is not to be in the hand of the devil; we are never again to be in the hand of the devil or of this world with its organisations; we are to be in the hand of Christ. God is working with us to have us in the hand of Christ, and in that hand to become one stick instead of two. That is the idea of unity; you could not have a more striking figure of it, two sticks becoming one in His hand.

Ques. You referred to the Spirit at the beginning of Acts; do you regard that as a kind of finish of the work so that the Spirit should come, the result of the prophetic word by the Lord?

J.T. That is good; they represent the Lord's formation. He had breathed on them, and put the bones together and the sinews and so on.

Ques. So the prophetic word comes into operation

generally ? There is first the apostolic gift, and then following that we get the prophet's work. The assembly at the outset was the result of prophetic ministry, but they had no word as we have to-day.

J.T. Exactly. What you see in Peter's preaching was three thousand converted, and they just stand up and Peter and the others tell them what is to be done. They are to repent and be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, and they should receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. That was clear. Now what took place in them ? That is the next thing. Well, it is said that three thousand were added that day. We are not told who added them nor to what they were added. They were added to something, so what follows is to bring out this very result, the way the bones came together according to God, and the sinews came on and the flesh and the skin. I think the description at the end of the chapter shows that these results were present, and the Lord identified Himself with them in adding to that.

Ques. What is the application of it to-day ? That at the outset was practically done by the Lord.

J.T. It must be on the same principle. What is so needed in our services to men around us, in our preachings and the like, is to keep the element of prophecy in view. The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom or the gospel of the grace of God is all a question of grace, but prophesying is that the subjects of grace might be developed in the mind of God.

R.B. You mean that the prophetic word reaches the conscience ?

J.T. That is what I thought.

Ques. Is that to bring us into accord with what God is morally ?

J.T. Exactly. The " life of God " does not refer to what He is in His own being in Deity, but what

He is morally, as having come out in relation to what is here, men being alienated from it. It had come within their range, but instead of embracing it they were alienated from it through the ignorance in them, but over against that there is the "new man, which according to God is created in truthful righteousness and holiness"; it is "as the truth is in Jesus."

F.W. What principles do you see here in Judah and Joseph?

J.T. Well, verses 11 to 14 give us the application of the figure, that it refers to Israel. He says, "I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land; and ye shall know that I Jehovah have spoken, and have done it." That is the thought; we know it is God's work and that He has done it. Well then, in verse 15, it says, "And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, And thou, son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions. And take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel, his companions. And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thy hand." God is showing us how He will bring about unity in Israel by and by, but the point for us is that division may exist amongst us. Judah represents the selection of God for special privileges. Ephraim, that is Joseph, had also been selected; Ephraim had been set before Manasseh on the same principle on which Judah was taken up, but Ephraim had sacrificed his position. He had lost it, and having had it before Judah it necessarily produced jealousy, so that Judah vexed Ephraim and Ephraim envied Judah. These are conditions that are very common amongst the people of God, and they are not helped by mutual agreement to differ; there is no such thought as that here. We may bear with one another and make up our minds we have got to go on with

this and that one, but the right way is development of life in all that is according to God.

F.W. So that neither line can be dropped; neither the Judah line nor the Joseph line can be eliminated.

J.T. They become one stick, and the division ceases in the most positive way when they are one stick. One stick is not divided. They had been two, but now one typically in the hand of Christ.

F.W. Would you say broadly they suggest the line of sovereignty and the line of responsibility?

J.T. I doubt it here. I think the allusion here is to the fact that Israel had been a divided nation. Primarily Judah would represent sovereignty, but he became as naughty as Ephraim, so there is not much to say about it here, save that God brings about unity, and in this way, by working in us in the fibre of our beings on the principle of life. That is what is in view.

Ques. Are they all coming under David as king?

J.T. That is what is in view. David is to be their king, which of course is Christ; but first the stick is in the hand of the prophet; it is Christ as Prophet; He is Prophet, Priest and King. It is in Ezekiel's hand. It is really Mark's gospel, you might say, that you know why you are what you are; you not only know that you are this and that, but *why* you are it. "Ye shall know that I . . . have done it." Mark would give us the prophetic intelligence of things; it is the gospel that presents the Prophet, and that brings in unity on the line of the mind of God in life.

R.B. Is the effect of the prophetic word as forced in in this power, that the element of envying and vexing would disappear, for the persons would be together in the unity of life?

J.T. That is what comes out, so that God works from the bottom. That is what is needed if there is a divided state of things, and if I judge myself, then

this principle proceeds and God works from the bottom. There is nothing brought about in us aside from self-judgment. God works from the bottom as soon as that takes place, otherwise the work is superficial.

Ques. Does that answer to the Lord's exhortation to cut off the members ?

J.T. The repenting sinner is the principle. We never lose the thought of repentance in the divine procedure ; the element of repentance is ever present. " God has to the nations also granted repentance to life," Acts 11 : 18. That is what is in view. God wants us to live ; not simply to be justified, but to live, and to live in the life according to Himself.

Ques. Would Philadelphian features be the outcome of life, in contrast to the word to Sardis. " Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead " ?

J.T. That is very good ; they kept the word of His patience. There was " a little power," which would mean what we are speaking of, which is life, for the Spirit is life. It is a question of power, and they had kept the word of His patience. I think that Philadelphia in the midst of the general apostasy represents God morally. What God is, is represented, and so, in Revelation, the first note you get from the Lord is a voice behind John and he turned to see the voice, which was a very remarkable thing. It shows the intelligence that was with John, that that voice came from a Person. It is the identification of the voice with the Person, and John sees the Lord in judicial garb, and falls at His feet as dead, and the Lord puts His right hand upon him and says, " Fear not ; I am the first and the last, and the living one : and I became dead." That is, there is a Person before him ; he sees a living Person, living according to God. " I am . . . the living one : and I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages." Well, that is the principle of life in Revelation, and

following on that, you have the living creatures, and life in varied aspects ; that is the thought.

P.L. The thought of writing is emphasised. It says, " Take thee one stick, and write upon it," and then, " Take another stick, and write upon it," and then later, " The sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thy hand before their eyes." Would that answer a little to Christ writing in new covenant ministry ?

J.T. I think so. When the Lord laid His right hand on John He had already told him to write in a book and send to the seven assemblies, but after He laid His right hand upon him He says, " Write," but He does not say to whom, and He divides the book into sections and gives them the headings : " What thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are about to be after these." He would write in life. There is a living touch in it, and so the Lord says to the overcomer in Philadelphia, " I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, from my God, and my new name." Well, all that would be in accord with what we are saying, that is, what is according to God is written upon the man, the " name of my God." That must all work out in a moral sense in relation to what is here.

P.L. So that the revival involves the glory of Christ both as Speaker, the Prophet, and as Writer.

J.T. Then as King ; David is king. I think it is well to note it is the prophet that holds the sticks in his hand, because it is for the Lord in that light to have them in His hand, and in any gathering where these conditions may be, the Lord would bring this about. The prophet comes in, well, the state of the saints is very dry ; there is no interest in the meetings. The bones are very dry, the prophet says. If one comes into a meeting in this way and finds things

very dry, prophecy is needed, prophesying over them and to them, and then the bones come together. Because as I think of the bones, well, what am I to be ? I must stand up like a man, and that is what it says they did ; they " stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." And then the idea of unity will come in, so that the unity in the gathering is the unity of life in the hands of the prophet, and then under the authority of king David, because David is a beautiful type of Christ in the very sense in which we are speaking. He is a living kind of man ; he began by being beautiful. The young man that saw him said, " He is a valiant man and a man of war, and skilled in speech, and of good presence, and Jehovah is with him," 1 Sam. 16 : 18. That is the kind of man that is to be over us.

G.C.S. This is in contrast to the staff Beauty and the staff Bands broken because these features were not seen.

J.T. Exactly. Now you have here that the covenant is one of peace : " And I will make a covenant of peace with them ; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them ; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for ever. And my tabernacle shall be over them ; . . . and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know that I Jehovah do hallow Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for ever." It seems to me a chapter like this bears on any gathering. It is the mind of God brought in in this way, unity established in life, and His sanctuary known there as we are hallowed by Him.

Ques. Do we get the thought of the universal idea of the assembly there ?

J.T. Quite ; it is no longer two but one.

Rem. There is the local assembly where the thing

is worked out, and then you have the universal idea.

J.T. It is all Israel that is in view.

Rem. It speaks of the sanctuary being in the midst of them twice, and the tabernacle being over them.

J.T. It shows the idea of the sanctuary in the midst of us is a leading thought here. The tabernacle over is for shelter ; that is, it is the care of God.

G.C.S. Are they the conditions in which God can dwell ?

J.T. Exactly ; His sanctuary.